MEDIATING ALTERNATIVE IMAGINARIES OF AID AND DEVELOPMENT: THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR CONTEMPORARY NGOS

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Abstract

This thesis extends considerations around the role that geography can play in disrupting dominant representational tropes through which Global North publics understand distant people and places. Through a focus on NGO communication of aid and development, this research unpacks the possibilities of counter-geographical knowledge to disrupt problematic but deeply entrenched public imaginaries of intervention. As significant actors in the field of aid and development, NGOs constitute powerful and influential communicative structures that represent distant lives to Global North publics. Historically, representations dominating aid and development discourse have scripted distant people and places through reductive and uncritical tropes of poverty, conflict, famine and suffering. The hegemonic imaginings of difference and distance underpinning such tropes have in turn deeply impacted how publics understand the realities of global poverty, while also legitimising specific ideas around response and responsibility. However, in the midst of increasingly diverse and demanding humanitarian landscapes, the dominant imaginaries prioritised by NGOs obstruct the promotion of more critically nuanced public engagement with issues like inequality, injustice and intervention. This thesis examines the potential for counter-geographical representation as a lens through which an alternative, and potentially disruptive, public imaginary can be considered. Moreover, the research examines the possibilities and challenges posed to NGOs in mediating such representations.

The findings of this thesis extend traditional critiques of hegemonic media representation along three main lines of inquiry. Firstly, examining the discourses prioritised by four case study NGOs, the findings identify the organisational principles that provide the greatest potential (and challenge) to NGOs engaging their publics with counter-geographical knowledge. In doing so, this thesis moves beyond dominant critiques of media representation focusing on specific representational and aesthetical tropes. Instead the analysis draws out some of the key organisational principles and characteristics that pose significant obstruction to calls for alternative discourse. Secondly, a focus on the websites of each case study organisation provided a wider communicative platform for examination; the broadest range of each NGO's public engagement priorities and narrative tropes are articulated and operationalised on their websites. In examining the range of public imaginaries produced through these different public engagement objectives, the instances where counter-geographical knowledge was activated (and/or marginalised) highlights the organisational priorities that best suit the promotion of a more critically aware public audience. Finally, the thesis outlines an adapted framework for critical discourse analysis to examine the role of web design and interactivity in the production and performance of geographical imaginaries. Through methodological and theoretical insights from web design, digital geographies and media studies, this thesis contributes a working methodological framework for managing and examining the discursive capacities of a website's written text, imagery and clickable buttons. Overall,

the thesis examines each NGO's capacity and willingness to produce counter-geographical knowledge to disrupt dominant mediations of aid and development, thus pointing towards a research trajectory for unpacking and challenging intersections between representation, media and power more broadly

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is an original piece of academic research composed by me (Natasha Keenaghan) and the research within has been conducted by me.

Signed 

Date…14/04/2020.....

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Who instilled a love for reading, learning and debating that I am only truly appreciating now…

GLOSSARY

Global South:

While it is acknowledged here that such (or any) categorisation of global regions is deeply problematic, this thesis uses the term Global South to refer to those countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean, and Asia that are designated economically poor (Willis, 2009). Conversely, Global North is used throughout this thesis to refer to economically rich countries within Europe, the United States, New Zealand, Japan and Canada (Willis, 2009).

Aid and Development:

This thesis incorporates aid and development to refer to the grassroot interventionary practices and policies that address concerns of global inequality, injustices, and crises. Given that this research focuses on the representation of such work, it was determined that the concept of humanitarianism was embedded with political ramifications that were beyond the scope of this research (see Fassin, 2010 for example). Moreover, given that the four case studies included different blends of relief and long-term development objectives, it was important to reference both types of intervention separately.

Soft Imaginaries of Aid and Development:

In this thesis soft imaginaries of aid and development can be considered as the performance of hegemonic geographies and uncritical simplified knowledge for the public, whereby imagery and knowledge produced by and for the media naturalises a dominant way of understanding poverty and interventions. This builds from Andreotti's (2006) concept of soft understandings, whereby uncritical and simplified knowledge is produced to 'explain' inequality and interventions. Such understandings are embedded within a performance of historically rooted imaginaries of difference that continue to shape the world (Said, 1979). Thus, the dominant mediations of place, people and interventions can be said to cumulate into a series of 'soft imaginaries of aid and development'.

Counter-Geographies of Aid and Development:

Counter-geographies of aid and development is conceptualised in this thesis as an insistence on counter-geographical knowledge (Gregory, 2005) in the mediation of distant people, place and intervention. The performance of contextual and/or contrapuntal geographies is considered to challenge the process of abstraction and reduction that otherwise dominates discourses of aid and development.

1. INTRODUCTION

"People are dying NOW. Give us your money NOW"

Bob Geldof, Live Aid Wembley Stadium, Saturday 13 July 1985

"In Ethiopia some 8 million people urgently require food assistance […] Additionally, close to 9.5 million people are in need of other types of assistance, such as education or shelter"

CARE International, The Ten Most Under-Reported Humanitarian Crises of 2018, February 2019

In recent history, the prioritisation (and marginalisation) of crises within the public[1] conscience has been directly linked to the communication of distant suffering and poverty is across media platforms. Such mediations of suffering and crises carefully script narratives that continue to shape and inform our understandings of, and responses to, the suffering of distant strangers. However, the construction and presentation of such mediations are a highly selective and deeply problematic process. The promotion (and dismissal) of knowledge about distant suffering and humanitarian crises ultimately contributes to a hierarchal depiction of causes. The public imaginaries that emerge through this process of mediation subsequently places constraints upon the scope of aid and development practitioners. Such is the influence of public support (and donations), the capabilities of NGO practitioners in tackling crises at grassroot levels are shaped by the public imaginaries of aid and development promoted through the media (Power, 2019; Powers, 2018; Richey, 2018; Polman, 2010). However, as demands for aid and development assistance continues to increase exponentially both in frequency and complexity, traditional means of public engagement and support with distant suffering become ever more redundant to requirements. Dominant reductive public imaginaries of aid and development are posing significant obstruction to the innovation required by practitioners;

1 The use of the word public throughout this thesis refers to the general public sphere that NGOs (and their websites) engage for their public engagement objectives. It is acknowledged here that the public is not a homogenous group, nor does the thesis look to unpack the subjectivity of audience or audience interpretation as a result of NGO engagement. Instead the focus of this thesis remains on how NGOs construct people and place in the website content they produce for public consumption.

mediated representations dominating coverage of global suffering fail to address the diversity and density of needs that are emerging from contemporary aid and development contexts.

In February 2019 Care International released their report detailing the ten most under-reported humanitarian crisis in international media coverage over the previous (CARE International, 2019). This report noted how media and news coverage had all but dismissed the displacement of an estimated 1 million Ethiopians from their homes due to violence between conflicting rebel factions. This enforced mass movement of people had compounded pressure on government agencies and NGO practitioners, who had been already grappling with a food crisis in the country. The consequence led to a food shortage crisis impacting 17.5 million people in the region (CARE International, 2019). The lack of coverage on this crisis in particular, acts as a damning reminder of the role that media plays in prioritising, and by extension marginalising, crises and their specific causes for public consumption. Not least because almost three decades earlier, Ethiopia was the epicentre of an international 'humanitarian moment', one that would frame how aid and development would come to engage Global North publics in the ensuing decades. Following Michael Buerk's BBC report of a 'biblical famine' in Ethiopia, the period between 1984 and 1985 saw a monumental mobilisation of international focus (public and political) on the suffering of Ethiopians. Buerk's report sparked press attention on the famine to rise from 50 column inches in early October of 1984, to the 1200 column inches in the first two weeks following the initial broadcast (Franks, 2013). Moreover, British and American governments increased their aid as a direct response to the public alarm that had subsequently emerged; meanwhile musician Bob Geldof set about his plans for what would become the Live Aid Concerts during the following summer (Shaw, 2007). The unprecedented international response reached its crescendo at two Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia in July 1985, where £150 million was raised for the Ethiopian famine response by an international audience that spanned over 1.5 billion viewers (Frank, 2013).

The stark disparities across the media coverage of Ethiopian humanitarian crises, and the subsequent mobilisation (or lack thereof) of public engagement is demonstrative of the overarching problem at the heart of this research; the ambiguous and problematic relationship between media and public engagement with distant Global South suffering. The mediation of distant suffering has been found (see Power, 2019; Richey, 2018; Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006) to transfer to the public a moral imperative to respond and alleviate. However, the production and prioritisation of distant suffering through the media has a troubling influence on global crises, including what we know about them, what we are willing to know about them, and what actions

we will take in response. Historically, understandings of Global South poverty and responses have been scripted through decontextualised and uncritical imaginaries embedded with powerful registers of difference and superiority. As a result, public engagement has prioritised a narrow and emotive-based understanding of issues of global inequality and injustice. NGOs are significant and powerful communicators of this knowledge, and their role as both agents of intervention and public engagement have put them at the centre of quite a sustained academic critique around mediations of distant suffering. In particular, NGO donation campaigns have been identified as significant contributors to dominant and simplified discourses of Global South poverty and NGO interventions (Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013). These dominant discourses not only inform understandings of crises and suffering, but they legitimise and justify interventions and shape expectations of what aid and development looks like. NGOs therefore signal one of the most significant contributors to a selective body of knowledge that influences and (often) determine for whom and when the public should respond. Additionally, in performing such selective knowledges, NGOs are themselves entrenched within the broader geopolitical justifications of interventions maintaining the priorities of Global North societies from where they operate. As such NGOs provide an important and powerful communicative structure through which to consider the construction of public discourses of aid and development. NGOs provide a space to consider the principles that are protected by dominant mediated discourses of Global South poverty and crises. However, NGOs also offer a platform to consider the challenges and possibilities for producing an alternative representation of people, places and humanitarian, where a more critically engaged and contextual public discourse of crisis and poverty can emerge.

This thesis aims to contribute and extend critiques of dominant mediations of aid and development. Through a focus on NGOs the research unpacks the historical scripting of poverty, suffering and intervention that dominates public discourse of aid and development. In doing so, it emphasises both the challenges and possibilities posed to NGOs by the promotion of a more critically engaged understandings of Global South poverty, and aid and development work that may ultimately re-orientate public responsibility for responding to issues of inequality and injustice.

1.1 Research Aim & Objectives

This research examines the discourses that are produced by four case study organisations through their websites, unpacking how each organisation constructs and prioritises knowledge for their public audiences. The research looks to:

Examine the opportunities and challenges posed by and to each case study NGO in the production of critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses.

The specific objectives of this thesis include:

1. To examine how each case study NGO website discursively constructs the Global South 'Other', critically examining the key understandings promoted around issues of inequality, suffering and/or crisis;

2. To examine the key discourses on aid and development interventions that emerge from each NGO website. Here, the research pays particular attention to the interventions prioritised by each organisation, considering how each website mediates narratives of NGO work;

3. To unpack the connections promoted by each NGO website in the presentation of distant suffering, focusing particularly on the role of these digital platforms in promoting responses to address distant suffering, examining, in particular, how public responsibility is mediated;

4. To establish a methodological framework that responds to the discursive and performative power within online and NGO communication, outlining an analytical responding to the challenges of online interactivity and multimodality.

In examining the discourses prioritised by all four case studies and unpacking the organisational choices/priorities that underpin such knowledge, this research can consider the challenges and opportunities posed to NGOs by a call for alternative discourse. The four case study organisations were chosen on the basis that they reflect a broad range of different motivations and priorities relevant to contemporary sectoral capacities to produce discourse for their publics. As a result, this research not only aims to examine the existence (or not) of alternative representations within each case study NGO, but it also explores the principles and

relationships maintained by the organisations through their mediations of poverty, aid and development, and public responsibility. This perspective extends traditional existing critique, considering the organisational principles that might best suit, and those most obstructive to, the production more critical and contextually nuanced understandings of global poverty and humanitarian crises.

1.2 The Case Studies: A Brief Introduction.

The construction of public discourse by contemporary NGOs was examined using a case study approach. Here, four case study organisations were chosen on the basis that the represented a broad range of different organisational structures and principles that shape their public engagement strategies (see Chapter 3). The four case studies at the focus of this research include Concern Worldwide, Trócaire, Pencils of Promise and Acumen. First, Concern Worldwide (Concern hereafter) is an Irish, Dublin-based organisation that works on poverty eradication and relief in the Global South. Founded in 1968 as a direct response to the Biafran crisis, the organisation currently operates in more than 50 countries through both emergency response projects and development programmes. Concern's programmes target objectives under five main programmatic themes; 'Health and Nutrition', 'Education', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Livelihoods' and 'Advocacy'. Next, Trócaire, based in Maynooth, Ireland is a raid and development organisation founded in 1973 by Irish bishops as the official development agency of the Irish Catholic Church. Currently, Trócaire operates across relief and long term development programmes in 20 countries. The themes and targets of Trócaire's work programmes include 'Sustainable Livelihoods', 'Governance and Human Rights', 'Emergencies', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Gender Equality' and 'Environmental Justice'. Thirdly, based in New York, United States, Pencils of Promise was established in 2008 targeting the provision of quality education in the Global South. Currently operating within three countries (Laos, Guatemala and Ghana), the organisation provide educational facilities, equipment and services to communities where literacy and school attendance rates are below the national average. Finally, Acumen Inc. (Acumen hereafter) is another registered '501(c) (3)' charity based in New York, United States. Established in 2001 the organisation targets poverty eradication through a social entrepreneurship model of development, distributing investments into other organisations (both for profit and charitable entities) who target social impact within low-income communities in the Global South.

All four case studies at the focus of this research provide a range of different organisational principles ranging from the more conventional charity-based NGOs of Concern and Trócaire, to Acumen and Pencils of Promise who hold clear social entrepreneurship values and characteristics. As a result, the case studies present a snapshot of approaches operating within aid and development sector more broadly. Through these four case studies (and their websites), the construction of discourse was considered through a varied range of organisational structures, interventionary approaches, and financial capacities.

1.3 The Research Context

Academics have found that dominant mediations of Global South suffering and poverty not only inform public understandings and donor expectations (see Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017 Dogra 2014), but also play a significant role in framing the legitimisation and justification of intervention (see Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015; Baillie-Smith, 2013; Polman, 2010 and Bebbington, 2004). Dominant imaginaries promoted throughout the media and within NGO campaign material have been found to contribute to narrow public expectations of NGO work, depicting quick and reactive 'fixes' that emphasise measurable success and accountability to Northern donors. As a result, critics have noted the growth of standardised programmes that lack local context and marginalise situated knowledges (Fowler, 2010; Bebbington, 2004). Cognisant of such concerns regarding the dominance of hegemonic imaginaries within public discourses of aid and development, this thesis argues for the (re)activation of the counter-geographies that engage the corporeality of poverty and humanitarian crises. In order to extend more innovative and fluid approaches that address Global South needs, NGOs must mediate messages that aim to engage their donor public or audience with the complexities and nuance involved in humanitarian work. As such the geographical concepts of counter-geographies (Gregory, 2005) and relational responsibility (Darling, 2009) are explored throughout this thesis, for their potential in contributing to a more critically engaged and contextually nuanced public imaginary of aid and development.

Critics often note the powerful role that legitimacy and donor-accountability hold within dominant mediations of poverty and suffering (Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2006; Bebbington, 2004). While many of these studies call for the disruption of the unequal global relations underpinning such discourse, there is a theoretical gap in research regarding how such

alternatives might emerge and indeed how well suited NGOs are to such an endeavour. For example, critiques of NGO discourse and communication have often occurred within the context of a rather hegemonic consideration of the NGO sector; NGOs dependency on donation has framed much of the discussion around the material they produce for their public audiences. In order to gain a better understanding of the range of capacities within the contemporary NGO sector (and their impact on knowledge production), this thesis expands its focus to consider the diversity of NGOs operating within aid and development currently. In considering a broad range of different organisations, the examination of discourse and potential for alternative representations is considered through a varied and wide-ranging series of approaches, priorities and financial structures.

Relatedly, examinations of NGO material produced for their public audiences have focused on specific representational tropes (see Wells, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2006), or indeed particular campaigns (see Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). Amongst such research, NGO material produced online has also been subject to increased scrutiny, much of this has been on social media platforms and again tends to be campaign-focused (Chouliaraki, 2013; Madianou, 2013). A narrow analytical focus therefore emerges within such research, where the NGO material subject to critical analysis is mostly limited to donation campaign and development education. Researchers (Orgad, 2013; Orgad and Vella, 2012; Henderson and O'Neill, 2011; McCloskey, 2011) have unpacked the often tenuous relationships between education priorities and donation campaigns within NGOs. Yet, the broad majority of this existing research tends to negate how organisations simultaneously produce knowledge for the public under a range of different contexts. These include but are not limited to donation and development education; other public engagement objectives such as public accountability, advocacy, awareness, the sale of merchandise and fundraising are all facilitated on an organisation's website. As a result, the opportunities and challenges that arise for alternative public discourse within such contexts remains under-researched. This thesis focuses on organisational websites to consider a diverse range of different contexts that an organisation produces knowledge and understanding for at any one time. In doing so, the research extends its examination of NGO discourse beyond donation and education priorities, to consider how other public engagement objectives may influence an organisation's construction of discourse.

In summary, responding to gaps in existing research, the central aim of this research is not limited to an analysis of the discourse produced by organisations about aid and development, but to extend considerations into the various and diverse contexts that contemporary NGOs prioritise knowledge and responses for the public. By focusing on case study organisations that are characterised by a diverse range of approaches, the research looks to draw out the organisational characteristics and principles that inform the potential for alternative discourses to emerge. As a result, this thesis simultaneously responds to a growing body of research around the rise of online platforms within NGO mediation while acknowledging that an insistence on alternative discourse exists in a sector of diverse organisations and priorities.

1.3 PROJECT SUMMARY

The core argument of this research demonstrates how the production of alternative representations for mediation by NGOs, are constrained through a dependency on decontextualised and dehistoricised imaginaries focused on sustaining legitimacy and limiting risk to public support (and donation). The range of organisations studied in this research demonstrate that such dependency however is not specifically related to any clear financial (in)capacities. Instead it is the willingness of the organisation to expand their public engagement priorities beyond the generation of support and donation that constrains their critical engagement of audiences. In doing so, this thesis argues that an alternative paradigm challenging the patriarchy of aid and development work not only requires the promotion of alternative counter-representations of distant crises, but also requires a reworking of the public engagement priorities that conventional imaginaries maintain.

Empirically, the production of discourse through the case study websites was examined through a combination of discourse analysis and content analysis of the organisation's material. Specifically, an adapted critical discourse analysis[2] was designed to examine the discursive and performative power of the websites. This included a critical analysis of the role language, imagery and interactive 'clickable buttons' played in organisations' presentation of knowledge to the public. In adapting Fairclough's (1993) framework for critical discourse analysis, this research considers the influence of a website's design and interactivity in shaping how the

2 This critical discourse analysis was based on Fairclough's (1993) three dimensional framework

public were prompted to understand and respond to Global South suffering. In addition, the analytical framework included content analyses of both the visual depiction of Global South, and the promotion of actions through clickable buttons. This provided an important quantitative validation of findings and responded to methodological concerns (Widdowson, 2004) highlighted in critiques of critical discourse analysis. As a result, in responding to the challenges posed by the websites' multimodality and interactivity, the research design utilised here also contributes important methodological insights relevant to media, digital activism and development studies.

1.4 Structure of The Thesis

Chapter 2 introduces a profile for each of the case study NGOs at the focus of this thesis, providing a brief overview of the relevant organisational structures and principles that inform how each organisation approach their public audience. Chapter 4 highlights the key concepts that underpin the thesis by reviewing the literature pertinent to the research's aims and objectives. Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework used within this research. In line with the fourth research objective, Chapter 5 describes the methodology utilised for analysis, detailing the application of an adapted framework for critical discourse analysis. The findings relating to the case studies' construction of poverty, suffering and crises are outlined in Chapter 6, addressing the first research objective. Chapter 7 discusses the findings in regards the organisations' construction of aid and development and contributes to answering the second research objective. Chapter 8 highlights the responses promoted and facilitated by the case study websites and related to the third research objective. Chapter 9 draws together the findings from the research to contextualise the capacity and willingness of the NGOs to produce alternative discourse for their public audiences. Finally, Chapter 10 conclusions arising from the research are presented and a potential future research trajectory is outlined.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis aimed to unpack NGOs' mediated representations of poverty and intervention, examining the potential of these organisations to encourage a more critically engaged and contextually nuanced discourse for public consumption. Through a postcolonial critique of four case study organisations and their websites, the research looked to identify some of the key opportunities and challenges posed to contemporary NGOs by an insistence on alternative discourses of aid and development. This chapter situates these objectives within existing research and (relevant) theoretical perspectives. The communication of aid and development has been subject to a wealth of empirical and theoretical inquiry, particularly in terms of representations from NGO campaign material and mediations of the Global South 'Other'. Dominant representations produced by NGOs (and the media more broadly) have especially been subject to critique, as they prioritise knowledge that perpetuates North/South binaries and frames public understandings of crises, and issues regarding inequality and injustice (Power, 2019; Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Baillie-Smith, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006; Escobar, 1995). As significant agents of intervention, NGOs remain powerful communicative platforms for the production and performance of this knowledge. However, in the midst of increasingly diverse aid and development landscapes, such conventional and often reductive imaginaries have been found to place constraints on the effectiveness of work at grassroot level. In light of such concerns, this thesis explored the opportunities and challenges posed to NGOs in presenting alternative representations of aid and development work. The relevant literature is reviewed in four sections:

- The first section focuses on how dominant discourses of aid and development establish a Global South 'Other', and therefore reinforce problematic binaries that perpetuate ideas of superiority among Global North publics. This section draws on the work of Escobar (1995), Said (2003) and Gregory (2004) to conceptualise the performance of aid and development imaginaries that dominate NGO communications. This section was foundational for this project, as are the performances of such imaginaries underpinning how Global North publics understand and engage the Global South.

- The second section of this literature review considers how the media and NGOs engage publics with distant strangers. This section examines how geographical imaginaries are produced and performed through mediated material to script public responses. Key concepts examined in this section include the mediation of distance, spectatorship and compassion. Moreover, this section also considers the role that representational tropes such as suffering imagery, positive imagery and post-humanitarian communication hold in negotiating the distances between a spectator in the Global North and a distant Global South 'Other'. Again, this was important for this thesis as it establishes the theoretical principles informing how NGOs mediate engagement and responses for their public audiences. This theoretical understanding around spectatorship and mediation of distance provided the basis for unpacking the role of each website's interactivity and multimodality played in mediating public responses to distant 'Others'.

- The third section focuses on Global North understandings of Global South poverty and intervention, resulting from the mediation of distance. In particular, this section draws on concepts such as critical global citizenship, relational responsibilities and agonistic solidarity to consider how the mediation of Global South imaginaries frame public responses. This includes considerations of the role that digital platforms play in mediating such responses. This was particularly important given that the research looked to examine how more critically engaged public audiences might be encouraged. Similarly, an understanding of the role of digital media in the mediation of these responses was important for building a theoretically informed analytical framework.

- The final section returns a focus on NGOs specifically and their mediation of aid and development imaginaries. In particular the section considers how NGOs contribute to dominant discourses, through stereotypical and hegemonic representations and the organisational priorities that often underpin such discourses. Additionally, this section further considers the social entrepreneurship as a series of principles with the potential for disrupting the problematic influence of conventional NGO priorities including donation, education and donor accountability. In doing so, this section deepens an understanding of the reliance or dependant relationship between NGOs and dominant discourses they produce for the public.

2.2 Media Geographies: Imaginaries of Aid and Development

Media representations of difference and distance are entwined with geographical thought. The role of media and communication in shaping people's understanding and interactions with distant places has been subject to, and informed by, the work of critical geographers (see Ash, 2019; Adams et al., 2017; Gregory, 2010; 2005; Schwartz and Ryan, 2003). Within geographical research, the study of communication and place has spurned a diverse and vibrant sub-discipline of media geographies (Aitken, 2017; Adams, 2011) with media geographies enjoying increased growth within the discipline over the last decade. This has included examining media both in terms of its content and the contexts in which it is produced and consumed (Aitken, 2017; Adams, Craine and Dittmer, 2014; Adams, 2011). From within media geographies another 'discipline turn' continues to emerge as geographers consider digital platforms (Ash, Kitchin, and Leszczynski, 2019). Geographical inquiry is being applied to a range of digital platforms and technologies to unpack their capacities to mediate how we come to know and experience space and place (Ash, Kitchin and Leszczynski, 2019). In the context of this thesis and its focus on the NGOs' websites, geographers such as Rose (2019; 2017), Young (2019) and Ash (2019) have continued to demonstrate the importance of examining the influence that digital representation has on shaping contemporary understandings of place and people. However, one of the common threads linking the geographical inquiry of both media and digital platforms is the examination of dominance: the power relations that dominate the construction and communication of knowledge about place (Kitchin, Ash and Leszczynski, 2019; Adams, Craine and Dittmer, 2014; Adams, 2011). Geographical inquiry of both media and digital media endeavour to unpack the unequal power relations that impact how place is mediated, and how such mediations perpetuate peoples' marginalising attitudes, behaviours and actions. In the context of mediated representations of aid and development then, a critical geographical perspective has focused on the construction and communication of a distant Global South for Global North publics.

The 'popular' dimension of aid and development remains a powerful (and yet obstructive) core element of international interventions. Critiques of aid and development have noted how dominant international frameworks for intervention are premised on the discursive demarcation of the world, between those in need and those who help (Power, 2019; Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Baillie-Smith, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006; Escobar, 1995). Here, dominant discourses are embedded with hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South, and these ensure a justification

and legitimisation of the Global North as key actors within aid and development (Escobar, 1995). Any examination of NGO production of aid and development discourse therefore necessitates a closer consideration around the production of these geographical imaginaries.

Imaginative geographies for Said (1979) are the geographical abstractions that fundamentally inform how we understand and encounter distant people and place (see Chapter 4 also). However, these abstractions are underpinned by a global ordering that perpetuates dominant power dynamics. Imaginative geographies therefore emerge as knowledge about people and place is produced in the interest of maintaining dominant geopolitical priorities of the powerful (Said, 1979). Within these imaginaries distant people and places are 'Othered', as distance is folded into difference. Said (1979) suggested that this process of 'Othering' results in binaries of differences that perpetuate ideas of a superior 'self' and an inferior 'Other'. The performance of these imaginaries throughout public and political discourse was important to consider here, as the continued production and consumption of such abstracted geographic knowledge contributes to their dominance (Gregory, 2004). For example, in his critique on media framings of the 'War on Terror', Gregory (2005; 2011) demonstrated how dominant geopolitical discourses were embedded within the performance of imagined geographies of US airstrikes. Through news reports of the airstrikes these abstractions rendered context and corporeality of the destruction invisible, extending the distance between civilian causalities and the viewing US public (see Chapter 4). Gregory (2005) noted that this (continuous) mediation of distance between distant casualties and the US public activated the dominant 'Us'/'Them' narrative used to justify violent US air strikes that targeted civilian urban areas. The performed imagined geographies of violence prioritised a reductive representation of distant people and place through the presentation of maps and statistical figures (Gregory, 2005). As a result, public understandings of the 'War on Terror' were consequently formed on uncritical (imagined) connections between a democratic/righteous 'Us' and threatening/violent 'Them' (Gregory, 2005).

In the context of the research focus of this thesis, critiques of aid and development communication have anchored their concerns on the establishment of the Global South as an 'Othered' space (Power, 2019; Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Baillie-Smith, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006). As noted by Chouliaraki (2013; 2006 and Baillie-Smith, 2013) representations of the Global South 'Other' are based along reductive binaries of difference; for example, the Global North 'self' and the Global South 'Other'; developed/underdeveloped; First World/Third World. Difference is equated to distance in these binaries as abstracted

geographical knowledge (imagined geographies) marginalises engagement with diversity, context and nuance of the Global South. In fact, Escobar (1995) drew on Said's (1979) work to highlight how Global North's perspectives of the Global South are laden with registers of passivity, helplessness and need. Tellingly, in his call for alternative approaches Escobar (1995) even highlighted the obstructions posed by dominantly held imaginaries of the Global South; he argued that Global South identities and capacities have become subsumed by a discourse of aid and development rooted in cultural difference and Global North paternalism. Dominant imaginaries of aid and development in the media therefore have normalised global inequality and injustice as an inherent and inevitable element of Global South identity (Power, 2019; Powers, 2018). It is on this basis that Escobar (1995) encouraged the disruption of the dominant discourses that have historically framed aid and development.

Similar to the process that Gregory (2005) noted in the mediations of the War on Terror, imagined geographies of aid and development discourse have often marginalised or at least manipulated the corporeality in places; hegemonic and stereotypical depictions dominate media coverage of the Global South (Nothias, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Wells, 2013). Through media coverage of aid and development, dominant representations of people and place have prioritised ideas of helplessness and passiveness, promoting reductive and uncritical public understandings as a direct result (Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Andreotti, 2006). Consequently, this geographical ambiguity frames dominant discourses of aid and development through a Northern lens that ultimately fail to critically engage with the structural causes of poverty. For example, Power (2019), Dogra (2014) and Chouliaraki (2012) have all demonstrated how the dominance of uncritical simplified narratives have become deeply entrenched within media representations of Global South poverty and humanitarian crises. The continuous performance of these narratives within the public sphere (through media coverage of humanitarian crises for example), naturalises a 'cognitive frame' for the public through which they understand the Global South (Andreotti, 2016). As a result, narratives engaging the public with suffering and humanitarian crises have been found de-contextualised and de-historicised from dominant global politico-economic priorities (see also Stein, Andreotti, and Susa, 2019; Pashby, 2011). Importantly, from the perspective of this research, it is these representations that inform the public's encounter of the distant Global South 'Other', contributing to the dominant but reductive public/donor expectations that impact NGO work.

Dominant mediated discourse of aid and development therefore produce a reductive performance of the Global South. This abstraction promotes an engagement with (and

subsequent understanding of) suffering, causality and intervention that is removed from any contextually nuanced knowledge specific to the people and places depicted. In doing so, they reinforce a dynamic that contributes to suffering, as opposed to challenging it. Studies by Keenaghan and Reilly (2017), Dogra (2014), and Chouliaraki (2013; 2006) for example, have all noted how dominant representations produced through NGO campaign material abstract the geographies of distant suffering, presenting a series of non-descript homogenous representations of people and place. These representations reduce places to mediations of destructed landscapes, sparse and nomadic rurality, and over-crowded urban cities (see Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). This geographical ambiguity is accompanied by a selective representation of people, where indigenous communities become reduced to stereotypical depictions that perpetuate imaginings of helplessness and/or passiveness within Global South landscapes (see Power, 2019; Nothias, 2018; Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014).

Representations of helplessness and passiveness then contribute to the paternalistic attitudes that underpin uncritical understandings of distant crises (Chouliaraki, 2013; Escobar, 1995). NGO campaign material in particular prioritises this framing of aid and development for its affective power in communicating a dependency on Global North public; the fate of the suffering 'Other' depends on the agency of Northern actors. However, mediated NGO material (and media coverage more generally) results in marginalised (and often absent) understandings of the historical and geopolitical relationships that continue to influence global inequality. Through the performance of this abstracted and reductive geographical knowledge, how the public encounters distant suffering becomes decontextualised from historical and geopolitical contexts within NGO-produced material (Powers, 2018; Saunders, 2009). This was particularly relevant given the focus of this thesis; it is the lack of geographical, political and historical contexts that contributes to the reductive public understandings of global inequality and development.

Thus, one of the core tenets for this research's examination of aid and development discourse was the websites' production and performance of Global South imaginaries. Researchers continue to apply the concept of imagined geographies in their examinations of modern political phenomenon such as climate change activism (Ward, 2019), refugee settlements at Europe's borders (Martin, Minca and Katz, 2019) and migrant policy along the Mexican/American border (Loyd and Mountz, 2018). This demonstrates the continued relevance that Said's (1979) imaginative geographies hold to any considerations of an interplay

between discourse, media and identities. In fact, Dittmar and Bos (2019) argue that imagined geographies remain the "*foundational point*" for understanding how identities emerge through the media in contemporary geopolitics. In this thesis a focus on the imaginaries prioritised through each of the organisation's websites situated knowledge production within the dominant discourses of aid and development. The prioritisation of imaginaries by each case study contributed an understanding with regards how the NGOs contribute to or disrupt the 'Othering' of the Global South that is consistently operationalised within media discourse.

2.3 Mediating The Distant Global South

If production and performance of imagined geographies can be said to shape public understandings, it is important to consider how NGOs might utilise imagined geographies to script their publics' responses to Global South suffering. The work of Said (1979) and Gregory (2005) demonstrate how imaginaries inform public responses and understandings based on drawing connections between distant strangers (or not). Extending from this, how imagined geographies inform public engagement with Global South suffering is underpinned by the mediation of distance through representations of distant people and places. A significant body of work has emerged across a range of disciplines including geography, media studies and psychology, focusing on how relationships and connections are forged between viewers and distant strangers (Power, 2019; Nothias, 2018; Chouliaraki, 2013; Kyriakidou, 2015). A critical geographical approach to difference and distance remains central to much of this literature however; distance and difference are ultimately mediated by imagined geographies and the construction of the distant 'Other' (Power, 2019; Powers, 2018, Dogra, 2014). The literature regarding the construction of public responses to media coverage can generally be distinguished along three main interrelated themes; the mediation of distance, spectatorship, of the creation of connections and relationships between viewer and distant strangers.

First, Tomlinson (1999) conceptualises the mediation of distance through media platforms as a transformation of distant strangers into the conscious of a viewing public. This definition of mediating distant strangers ultimately reflects similar ideas within the performance of imagined geographies, where representations of distant 'Others' is rooted to a mediation of distance and difference for Global North publics. In fact, Silverstone (2006) acknowledges this when he refers to the geographical and social demarcations of 'Us' and 'Them' that operate through the mediation of distant strangers via media platforms. Silverstone (2006) defines this demarcation

as a ‘moral distance’, a connection is created to distant strangers based upon how/if the viewer situates the distant stranger within their own self-actualisation as a morally good citizen. This moral choice is ultimately underpinned by the imaginaries of distant people held by the viewer and the producer of the text; a reader/viewer’s choice to respond is based on their imagining of the distant ‘Other’ as a person in need/worthy of help. In other words, public responses can be considered in terms of how imagined geographies of the Global South frame mediations of (moral) distance between Global North publics and Global South communities.

The nature of such public engagement is subject to much debate (Chouliaraki, 2013; Madianou, 2013; Richey, 2018) however; academic perspectives diverge in regards the extent the media can play in ‘closing’ the distance and produce knowledge about distant people and places. Chouliaraki (2006) summarises that the debate concerning mediation of distant ‘Others’ can be split between two broad viewpoints: optimistic and pessimistic. An optimistic perspective considers the mediation of distant strangers as a means to increase Global North publics’ awareness and engagement with issues (i.e. coverage of suffering and inequality in the Global South can increase the consciousness of Northern publics). This perspective is rooted in the linkages drawn between increased media coverage of crises and the corresponding increases in public awareness and donation. Here, a positive account of mediating distant strangers holds that media coverage closes the distance between a distant ‘Other’ and the viewing audience; immediacy and proximity is created within representations of people and places that raises awareness by inserting the ‘Other’ into the consciousness of the public. Robinson’s (2002) ‘CNN Effect’ reflects a much-referenced optimistic perspective of mediating distant strangers through the media, it argues that increased news coverage mobilises a heightened public consciousness that applies pressure on political actors to respond (see also Myer, De Franco, and Otto, 2019; Olsen, 2018). More recently, ‘the CNN Effect’ has been considered in regards contemporary political phenomena such as Brexit, Donal Trump’s presidency and 2016 United States Presidential Election (see Perryman, 2019; Davis, 2019). The ‘CNN Effect’ is ultimately an acknowledgement of the power held by the media and its subsequent influence on public opinion and government intervention policy.

At its broadest conceptualisation, the ‘CNN Effect’ notes the capacity that mediation of distant crises have had on steering government intervention (or indeed the lack of intervention) through shaping public awareness. While Robinson (2002) uses the concept to focus on US military intervention specifically, Gilboa (2005) expanded the focus of the concept to consider the role the media has had in all conflicts post-World War II in Europe, Asia and Africa. Gilboa

(2005) notes the impact the 'CNN Effect' has had in increasing the role of the media as key actors in political phenomena. He argues that news broadcasters' role in shaping conflicts has grown with contemporary warfare, in that they hold increasingly affective power to prompt and justify political action through the mobilisation of public awareness (see Gregory, 2010; 2005 also). From the perspective adopted by Robinson (2002) through the 'CNN Effect', media coverage is considered in terms of its power to evoke a public (voter) mandate that politicians must to respond to. Within this optimistic perspective of media's capacity to mediate distance, imagined geographies that 'close the distance' between strangers can contribute to the construction of a more aware (if not always critically engaged) global audience. In other words, through an optimistic perspective drawing the public closer to the distant 'Other' can heighten ideas of global connectedness and responsibility (Chouliaraki, 2006).

However, the 'CNN Effect' itself and optimistic accounts of mediating distance more generally have been subject to critique, particularly regarding the idea of increased public engagement. For example, Chouliaraki (2006; 2013) amongst others (see Scott, 2016; Kyriakidou, 2015; Höijer, 2004) argue that optimistic accounts of mediation are far from straightforward. Audience-based media research notes that audience responses to increased coverage is not predictable nor guaranteed; Scott, (2018; 2013) and Brown and Minty (2006) both demonstrate how a public responsibility to respond is not inherent within any specific mediation-type. Thus, the global responsibility claim held within an optimistic perspective is challenged, it takes an increase in audience engagement as a taken-for-granted phenomenon. Such challenges reflect Baudrillard's (1995) early critique of mediation within media studies; he argued that the mediation of distant 'Others' was ineffective to posing any moral imperative on the spectator. Baudrillard's (1995) concerns centred on the basis that the viewer will always be free to choose how and if they connect with the distant stranger. This highlights an importance of considering how a producer (an NGO or a journalist) attempts to pursue their priority for increased audience engagement. In the context of this research specifically, how are public understandings shaped and prioritised through the NGOs production of material?

Reflective of such concerns the pessimistic perspective of mediating distant 'Others' emerges, Chouliaraki (2006) suggests that media platforms (digital or otherwise) disrupt the transference of an experience of distant 'Others' to the reader/viewer. Here, the capacity of media to construct immediacy is challenged (Chouliaraki, 2013;2010; Moeller, 1999). This perspective forwards the critique that the reality and immediacy of a distant experience is disrupted on the basis of it being (re)produced by a producer; a photographer or film-maker for example. One

of the most continually referenced reflections of a pessimistic account on the mediation of distant 'Others' is summed up in the idea of 'compassion fatigue' (Moeller, 1999). This conceptualises that the constant utilisation of suffering imagery in mediations of distant crises promote a dis-engagement among Global North publics (Moeller, 1999, see also Zhang and Luthor, 2019; Nothias, 2018). The concern being that publics become increasingly indifferent to, or even suspicious of depictions of distant suffering in the face of continued bombardment of negative/upsetting media coverage. In the context of aid and development narratives specifically, authors (see Nothias, 2018; Powers 2018; Chouliaraki 2013; Cohen, 2001) have all focused their critiques on pessimistic perspectives, again on the basis of assumptions made about audience behaviour. For example, in his seminal critique of compassion fatigue, Stanley Cohen (2001) questioned the notion of an autonomous audience-based response. Here, he argues, that a more in-depth understanding was required on the various ways that audiences respond to mediations of distant suffering, paying particular attention to how these responses may change over time (Cohen, 2001).

As a result, the mediation of the distant 'Others' is extremely important in regards the imaginaries of aid and development circulated through the media. Dominant imaginaries of aid and development are premised upon an optimistic perspective of mediation where the objective is increasing Global North awareness and response. In contrast, a pessimistic perspective is deeply problematic in the context of aid and development crises, as Global North indifference or denial can be detrimental to practitioners' capacity to address Global South suffering. Given the dependence of NGOs on the public for funding and support, NGO produced material needs to be considered in terms of how it negotiates the opportunities and challenges of mediating the distant Global South 'Other' to their publics. The mediation of distance is an important element for considering how the Global South is represented to Global North publics; NGOs' mediation of Global South people and places shapes publics' engagement with aid and development, their understandings of global poverty, and how, or indeed if, they will react. How viewers and Global South 'Others' are positioned within interactions, and what responses are promoted all become important elements to understanding how NGOs shape engagement with aid and development. Thus, NGO mediations of the Global South require an understanding of how NGOs position their Global North publics within representations of distant 'Others'.

Thompson (1995, p.84) noted the constructed nature of connections mediated within media coverage of distant strangers, highlighting the "*quasi-interaction*" facilitated between

audiences and distant strangers within media representations. Thompson (1995) suggests that given the viewer never engages in any direct interaction with a specific person, connections established through media should only be considered as a one-way interaction, and subject to production and interpretation of the producer and each audience-member. As this research was focused on knowledge production as opposed to audience interpretation, such considerations regarding how representations construct specific points of view for their audiences to encounter distant strangers was important. Ravenscroft (2004) builds on such ideas, arguing that all mediations of distant strangers result in an 'act of spectatorship' for the viewer, where the mediation of distance provides a specific way of seeing and encountering a distant 'Other'. Moreover, in her considerations of a pessimistic perspective to mediating distance, Chouliaraki (2006) believed that media coverage of distant suffering was akin to a type of voyeurism; distant suffering became framed as a spectacle for a spectator to witness from a distance. Ultimately, it is this role of spectatorship that mediates a 'proper distance' between viewer and distant 'Other'. In their considerations of 'proper distance' for example, both Silverstone (2006) and Chouliaraki (2006) highlight the constructed nature of the viewer's position (i.e. spectatorship), they argued that it is the simultaneous identification of difference and similarity between a spectator and 'Other' that determines a successful connection between both subjects. Based on this, should either similarity or difference be too salient the spectator may not connect to the distant 'Other', thus a 'proper' mediation of distance depends on the careful scripting of the spectator.

Establishing the role of spectator therefore becomes a process of maintaining the viewer's comfort (Szorenyi, 2009, see also MacDonald, 2016). Szorenyi (2009) extended the idea of Ravenscroft's (2004) spectatorship to argue that the spectator views inequality and suffering imagery through a lens of their own comfort and privilege (or in other words at a proper distance). Without careful scripting, distant Global South suffering can reflect a remoteness from the spectators comfort, and this discomfort may prompt a voyeuristic connection or an avoidance altogether. To combat this, both Szorenyi (2009) and Chouliaraki (2006) note how the role of spectator is centralised within dominant mediations of the Global South 'Other' (therefore activating a more optimistic approach to mediation). It is the mediation of distance as a one-way interaction and perpetuation of Us/Them global orderings that effectively contributes to the construction of the spectator's role within representations. Such material prioritises connections to the distant 'Other' that negates self-reflexivity and reinforces the spectator's comfortable and privileged position. On this basis, the difference between a

voyeuristic connection and a more activist-based connection according to Chouliaraki (2013), is the extent that the spectator is made to feel responsible or sympathy for the distant stranger. The creation of the spectator position therefore informs the type of connection and response that the viewer is expected to take. Along the optimistic/pessimistic debate the spectator either feels too far away to make a difference or will respond through an obligation to relieve the suffering. In the context of this research, the role of spectatorship within the case studies' representations of Global South 'Others' was therefore important to consider. In particular consideration was given to the type of connections that were prioritised between Global North and Global South, as these connections ultimately frame ideas of responsibility, citizenship and activism.

In the context of aid and development, the positioning of 'the spectator' promoted through representations of the Global South are largely informed by the creation and prioritisation of specific types of connections, i.e. sympathy, empathy, compassion. Audience-based research is particularly helpful in understanding how these connections are created to promote specific responses from the public audience. For example, key studies in audience-based research by Scott (2018; 2016), Kyriakidou (2015) and Höijer (2004) all highlight linkages between certain representations of distant 'Others' and the connections they prompt for viewers. Such research provides vital insight into the capacity of producers to script specific connections between a spectator and distant stranger. In one of the seminal audience-focused analysis carried out on public responses to media coverage of humanitarian crises, Brigitta Höijer (2004) found that images of distant suffering prioritising a discourse of global compassion informed a range of connections and reactions. Höijer (2004) identified four modes of compassion prompted by imagery of suffering and crises; tender-hearted compassion, blamed-filled compassion, shame-filled compassion and powerlessness-filled compassion. Here, Höijer (2004) noted that feelings of sympathy and pity led spectators to connect to through a 'tender-hearted compassion' towards the distant suffering 'Other', and this would often underpin a decision to donate or fundraise. Other spectators were found to demonstrate a blame-filled compassion towards distant suffering, whereby the spectator expressed anger and exasperation for distant suffering and towards those actors they perceived as responsible. This often informed responses similar to those outlined above, or sometimes more activist forms of response. Moreover, shame-filled compassion was observed in spectators who demonstrated a discomfort in being confronted within suffering that was so removed from their own privilege. Finally, in this study Höijer

(2004) notes that some spectators held a powerlessness-filled compassion, where an inability to make a difference to the experience of distant was expressed, leading to a lack of response.

Building on such insights, Kyriakidou (2015; 2008) further unpacked audience responses to mediations of distant suffering which highlight important consequences for NGO engagement. Importantly, Kyriakidou's (2015;2005) studies of audience response suggested that representations did not always result in the responses desired by the producer. In line with Höijer (2004), Kyriakidou (2015; 2008) studies challenged the idea of hegemonic audience response and demonstrated a diversity and variance in the connections that emerge through representations of distant 'Others'. Similar to 'tender-hearted compassion' observed by Höijer, Kyriakidou's (2015) 'affective witnessing' referred to audience engagement that demonstrated a high level of empathy and concern with distant sufferer. 'Politicalised witnessing' was characterised by Kyriakidou (2015) as situating the suffering within their contextual and causal elements; here the social and political dynamics causing the suffering are engaged with. In this way, politicalised witnessing draws similarities to Höijer's (2004) 'blame-filled compassion'; with blame laid at, and responsibility sought from, political and social structures. However, in contrast, Kyriakidou (2015) identified a 'detached witnessing' that was explained as a clear and evident lack of engagement the distant suffering 'Other'. In this lens of witnessing Kyriakidou (2015) found an audience response that deemed the depictions of suffering as either too distant or not relevant enough to the spectator, and thus would deny any connection to the Global South 'Other'.

This, detached spectatorship has been subject to increased inquiry, as researchers look to understand why, and in what instances do audiences reject connections to the distant 'Other' and deny any obligation to respond. Reflecting this, Höijer (2004) in her analysis had noted the reoccurrence of denial and scepticism in the face of suffering imagery, while Cohen (2001) had also previously raised concerns about the deniability of distant suffering imagery as a coping mechanism for uncomfortable viewers. Scott (2015; 2014) however focuses on this notion of audience denial in more detail. Scott's (2014) findings highlighted again the importance of the spectator's comfort; the study noted how audiences often rejected imagery of distant suffering in an attempt to protect their own comfort and mental welfare. Additionally, Scott (2015) suggested that audiences demonstrated a tendency to justify a lack of response rather than engage with the distant suffering being depicted. These findings (Scott, 2015; 2014) extended considerations raised by Seu (2010) around the denial strategies that audiences partake in when confronted with suffering imagery. Seu (2010) had highlighted a range of processes undertaken

by audiences when failing to respond to material concerning human right violations; justification is ultimately tied to spectator comfort. Where images or messages posed a challenge or disruption to the spectator's own positive self-identity as a morally good person, spectators often go through a process of rationalising or justifying a lack of response. Three 'strategies of denial' identified by Seu (2010) included; the audience critiquing the truth-claim of the message and the method by which the message was presented ('The Medium is the Message'); the audience questions the truth-claim within the message and the credibility of the communicator ('Shoot the Messenger'); and/or the audience challenges the practicality of the response being asked of them i.e donation or fundraising ('Babies and Bathwater'). Seu's (2010) findings demonstrate that these strategies allowed audiences to 'neutralise' the moral obligation being posed to them by the imagery/message, thus permitting them to justify and rationalise their lack of engagement.

In line with considerations around audience scepticism and detachment, Chouliaraki's (2013) observation of a 'post-humanitarian' shift in communication is important to note here, especially in the context of NGO material. In this shift, communication has moved from a concern with global inequality and suffering, towards a more self-orientated engagement based on a consumerist logic. Chouliaraki (2013, p.73) argues the 'Ironic Spectator' emerges with a "*disposition of low intensity emotions and technological imagination of instant gratification and no justification*". Here, rather than signalling a re-working of the compassion and denial (in all their variations discussed above), the spectator's engagement is characterised by self-reward (i.e. gaining an experience or product) and/or a self-actualisation as a morally good person (Chouliaraki, 2013, see also Madianou, 2013). Chouliaraki (2013) highlights that the Ironic Spectator's connection with the distant 'Other' is neither compassion nor denial, but rather a much more ambiguous connection. According to Chouliaraki (2013) 'grand' issues of causality, inequality, and trustworthiness are not relevant to the Ironic Spectator; instead immediate and easy engagement is sought from messages. The rise of consumerism and marketisation within the NGO sector has been a key factor in the emergence of the Ironic Spectator, as indeed has the growing use of digital communication platforms by NGOs (Madianou, 2013).

Thus, this orientation towards the growing narcissistic consumer-based desires of Global North publics provide a means to avoid audience denial strategies discussed above, and it is perhaps a symptom of the growing challenges faced by NGOs and their changing audience landscape. However, considering the context of this thesis, Chouliaraki (2013) argues that such an

orientation occurs often at the expense of any engagement with the cause at hand. As Madianou (2013) points out in his analysis of the 'Kony 2012' campaign, the narrative promoted worldwide engagement around the threat of the LRA without orientating a global responsibility to the (distant 'Other') kidnapped children. Instead public responsibility was framed by calls for a response (sharing the video on social media and buying toolkits) that prioritised a morally engaged networked Global North 'Us'. This is reflective of an 'introspection' that is prioritised by post-humanitarian communication; where self-benefiting rewards and positive self-identification is prioritised over engagement with the 'Other' or issues impacting the lives of distant 'Others' (Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2013; Madianou, 2013). Instead, engagement with the campaign facilitates a presentation of 'the self' as a morally good person. Thus, the focus of this communication strategy is based on creating and maintaining a spectator based on a more self-interested consumerist logic, where involvement is generally low effort for the spectator.

Audience-based research therefore highlights the importance of considering spectator comfort (and how this is maintained) in the construction and prioritisation of public responses by NGOs. Scott (2018; 2016), Kyriakidou (2015; 2008), Seu (2010) and Höijer (2004) have all demonstrated that deniability and lack of engagement increases with discomfort/distance. Meanwhile Höijer (2004), Cohen (2001), and Boltanski (1999) also pointed out how a key principle of mediating distant suffering states that engagement and attention is reserved for those who feel closer to the distant 'Other'. Therefore, an important factor in mediating distance for public engagement with Global South suffering necessitates considerations of the extent that the distant stranger is 'humanised' to the spectator. For example, Chouliaraki (2006) argues that spectator is more likely to feel a responsibility to react where the corporeality of suffering is depicted, as it draws a stronger more affective connection between spectator and sufferer. In contrast to where the distant 'Other' is removed or represented by statistics, the spectator is likely to respond or connect to the sufferer (Gregory, 2010; 2005). In the context of contemporary communication of aid and development, the types of connection that are forged within discourses of aid and development are dominantly based on compassion, sympathy and post-humanitarian logic. Crucially these have been found do very little in disrupting reductive binaries of difference or in decentring the spectator's comfort. This reiterates the influence of the production of imagined geographies, it also highlights the role that representational tropes have in contributing to the production and performance of imagined geographies and the connections they promote between viewer and distant 'Other'.

2.3.1 Visualising the Distant 'Other'

Imagery is considered one of the most powerful and affective means for bringing distant strangers 'closer' to viewing publics (Rose, 2017; 2002). Unsurprisingly, in aid and development communication the role of visual imagery has been central to unpacking how relationships are created between Global North publics and suffering 'Others' (Sontag, 2003; Chouliaraki, 2006). In particular the role of photojournalism and NGOs have been subject to critical inquiry in regards the use of imagery to represent the Global South and shape Global North's encounter with distant suffering. In fact, according to O'Sullivan (2014) the first televised famine, the Biafran Famine of the late 1960's, marks the first major confrontation Global North audiences had experienced with Global South suffering. The level of public mobilisation sparked by television imagery of that famine was unprecedented, such was its affective power it remains a dominant (albeit problematic) framing through which modern famines continue to be understood. The Biafran crisis was reflective of what Bilandzic (2006) notes as the transportive power of imagery; the image draws the spectator into the narrative being depicted and constructs a point of view for the spectator. For Bilandzic (2006) the presence of a narrator, the introduction of a specific character to the audience, or the aesthetic-construction of witnessing are all key elements utilised to draw the spectator 'closer' to the distant stranger. This highlights the role of representational tropes in constructing imaginaries of the Global South, and prioritising (and marginalising) relationships between a viewing public and a distant 'Other'.

As noted by scholars such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Rose (2001), and Haraway (1989) amongst many others, imagery constructs a specific 'way of seeing' for the viewer determining how/if they will engage with it. Images are part of a 'visuality' that is embedded within broader socio-cultural differences of society; an image and the connections it looks to promote are fraught with values, priorities and power. Reflecting on this Rogoff (2000) concluded that visual culture is one of the highest influencing forces in modern society for representing people and places. When visual representations are circulated throughout the public sphere, certain power dynamics are operationalised that render specific meanings visible while others are marginalised or negated (Rose, 2001; Haraway, 1989). In the context of aid and development communication, many authors (see Power, 2019; Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013; Hickey and Bracking 2005) have highlighted the power inherent through the visual representation of Global South poverty and crises. Through the continued circulation of visual tropes such as suffering and/or post-intervention imagery, news coverage and NGO

material have contributed to the institutionalisation of socio-economic norms at the root of global inequality. It was on this basis that the visuality produced and presented within the websites was analysed; imagery can be unpacked to examine knowledge prioritised and marginalised for the viewing public about the Global South (Rose, 2001).

The ethical debate that emerged from the use of suffering imagery in coverage of the Biafran crisis and the Live Aid Concerts is important to note here. Academic considerations today regarding visual representations of aid and development contexts remain rooted in the same initial concerns that emerged between both watershed moments. Such concerns predominantly question the impact that visual representations have had and continue to have public understandings of the Global South. NGO's specifically became a focus within this critique from early on, given their propensity for valuing consumable material for their audiences as opposed to more contextually engaged content. Overall trends of visual representation can broadly be summarised across three main trends.

2.3.2 Suffering Imagery

The suffering imagery trope became (and continues to be) recognised for its 'shock effect' (Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006; and Cohen, 2001). The aesthetic character of suffering imagery includes the photo-realistic depiction of the corporeality of hardship or suffering, where an authenticity claim comes from the seemingly unobstructed and often confronting visuality created for the spectator (Chouliaraki, 2006). In this imagery a melodramatic narrative arc is established that demarcates a clear moral legibility between right and wrong (Wells, 2013). While the persecutor is often rendered invisible, the impact of wrong-doing is evidenced by the depiction of suffering (Wells, 2013). In particular, children and women have been noted as the most dominant subjects in depictions of Global South suffering, many have attributed this their symbolic power of victimhood and helplessness (Thorpe, Hayhurst and Chawansky, 2018; Manzo, 2008). Burman (1995) argued that the isolated child is particularly dominant signifier for negative representation of the Global South, whereby the absence of their parents emphasises a passivity, helplessness and/or incapacity that reinforces inferior/superior imaginaries. In terms of the connections promoted through such imagery, Höijer (2004), Kyriakidou (2008) and Seu (2010) all noted how the representation of suffering women and children inform a range of responses of compassionate responses, based on these characterisations of helplessness and vulnerability.

As such suffering imagery produces an affective imaginary of tragedy, disease, powerlessness and urgency that often overrides considerations of causality or context, much less critical engagement. For example, the imagery from BBC news reports in 1984 depicting suffering in an Ethiopian relief camp at Korem, signalled the justification to act despite warnings and pleas for months preceding; these images sparked an unprecedented mobilisation of public and political reaction (Shaw, 2007). Regarding recent humanitarian crisis for example, the media coverage of the Ebola crises in West Africa was seen to convey a notion that the spread of the disease was something symptomatic of the traditional culture and chaotic inefficient governing systems of the region (Kilgo, Yoo, and Johnson, 2019; Pieri, 2019; Abeysinghe, 2016). Suffering imagery deployed by new reports and humanitarian campaigns on this crisis utilised emotive narratives of suffering that dismissed any engagement around why officials lacked the access to the appropriate resources (Kilgo, Yoo, and Johnson, 2019; Pieri, 2019; Abeysinghe, 2016). Moreover, the refugee crisis has also been found to diverge between a mediation of a threatening 'Other' and a threatened 'Other' within the media, the demarcation of these trends has been the activation (or not) of suffering imagery (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017; Chouliaraki and Stolic, 2017). Despite a seemingly consistent critique therefore, imagery depicting the suffering of the Global South 'Other' remains quite a significant aspect of Global South imaginary.

Speaking on suffering imagery, Kleinman and Kleinman (1997, p.98) argue that the positioning created by this imagery for the viewer creates a worrying perception: "*one message that comes across from a distance is that for all the havoc in Western society, we are somehow better than this African society*". While this "*pornography of suffering*" has been condemned throughout the NGO sector for decades, it continues to be a powerful discursive construct used to bridge the distance between the Global South and Global North publics (Dogra, 2014, p. xix). This is testament to the affective power that suffering imagery has come to hold in regards framing justification and/or legitimising Global North's intervention in the South (Dogra, 2014). Suffering imagery presents for the viewer an idea of superiority in that it creates a perception that this suffering is to be expected as a result of living in 'that place', and justification is based on such depictions of helplessness and passiveness (Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki 2013; 2006). Thus, suffering imagery creates a spectator role that not only creates an emotive obligation to respond, but it does so by reproducing a well-established imaginary of the Global South; the helplessness of the Global South does not decentre the spectator's comfort. Suffering imagery

therefore can be said to reflect those uncritical ('soft') understandings of poverty critiqued by Andreotti (2006) (see section 3.4 below).

2.3.3 Positive Imagery

In response to suffering imagery critiques, a more 'positive' visual trope emerged within aid and development communication. Dogra (2007) distinguishes positive imagery as the depiction of Global South agency and self-dependency, more often than not pertaining to post-intervention beneficiaries and 'saved' children. Furthermore, Chouliaraki (2010) characterises positive imagery describing two key styles; 'personalisation' that focuses on the agency of one Global South individual usually participating in a successful project, and 'singularisation' where the imagery targets donors as an individual who can make a positive contribution to a suffering 'Other'. Positive imagery emerged as an antidote to concerns about compassion fatigue and the unethical negative portrayal of the Global South (Dogra, 2007;2014, Chouliaraki 2010). Rather than producing an emotive appeal based on the creation of a tragic atmosphere as is the case with suffering imagery, the positive image looks to forge a connection through a focus on the grateful beneficiary whose life has been transformed because of donation/ intervention.

Critics (Dogra, 2014; Wells, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2010) have questioned this positioning of the Global South 'Other' as a grateful recipient, however. While the depiction of agency and dignity initially appears to challenge notions of passiveness and dependency, the extent to which positive imagery extends agency and identity has been questioned by many (see Manzo, 2008; 2006). In particular the prioritisation of children and women as key characters of positive imagery has been a central element of the critique (Thorpe, Hayhurst and Chawansky, 2018; Dogra, 2014). The positive depiction of Global South children for example has been noted to contribute to an infantilisation of the Global South, whereby the 'infantilised' Global South is rendered helpless and dependent upon the Global North (Dogra, 2014; Manzo, 2006). Moreover, imagery of children has been noted by many authors to hold values of universalism, morality and neutrality that serve to negate a critical engagement with issues, beyond the emotive and moral imperative to respond (Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014, Wilson, 2011). The positive framing of Global South women has also been unpacked by researchers; depictions of women as active and efficient economic actors or farmers growing produce prioritise a representation of traditional 'worthy' beneficiaries (Dogra, 2014; Wilson, 2011). Elsewhere, women are often depicted as mothers, here images depicting women as caregivers and nurturers

are reflective of universal ideals of motherhood. However, researchers (Thorpe, Hayhurst and Chawansky, 2018; Wilson, 2011) argue that the absence of any contextualising knowledge within the depictions of agency are problematic; the prioritisation of women as caregivers or breadwinners contributes to a 'feminisation' of the Global South (Dogra, 2014). By virtue of both this feminisation and infantilisation, positive imagery contributes to an imaginary of the Global South that perpetuates Global North paternalism. The comfort of spectator again therefore remains unchallenged within positive depictions of the Global South.

Therefore, despite clear aesthetical differences, visual tropes of suffering and positive imagery can be said to perpetuate similar connections of dependency, gratitude and paternalism. Moreover, this paternalism is underpinned by a reductive and problematic prioritisation of 'worthy' Global South characters (i.e. stereotypes). This raises greater questions around the politics of representing distant 'Others', in particular the cultural and geopolitical relations these imaginaries reinforce (and those that go unchallenged). In Butler's (2009) conceptualisation of a 'grievable life' for example, the mediations of distant 'Others' were distinguished based on values placed on some lives over others. In studying media coverage of the Iraq war, Butler (2009) demonstrated a demarcation between lives that were presented as 'grievable' and those who were simply dismissed or rendered invisible. This hierarchical presentation of suffering, she argued, was ultimately down to the media's performance of human suffering and vulnerability; the representation of suffering framed some bodies as worthy of saving/mourning, while others were deemed less worthy (Butler, 2009). The continued use of stereotypical characterisations of the Global South exposes a similar hierarchy of distant Global South 'Others'. In the case of positive imagery, intervention is deemed justification based on the presence of successful benefactors and/or productive economic actors (i.e. 'worthy' benefactors). Meanwhile throughout suffering imagery, the helplessness and victimisation of people is used to justify intervention. In both tropes, the depiction of 'worthy Global South Others' is deeply problematic, as dominant mediations of Global South crises and inequality are reduced to decontextualised and emotive depictions of stereotypical characterisations. Without any contextual or relational knowledge (see section 3.4 below), both suffering and positive imagery perpetuates emotive and uncritical connections to the Global South 'Other', therefore failing to challenge dominant geographical imaginaries, and instead.

2.3.4 Post-Humanitarianism

Aside from these dominant tropes of suffering and positive imagery, Chouliaraki (2013; 2010) situated the post-humanitarianism turn in aid and development communication as a response

to such critiques. With the rise of digital media and a marked increase in competition within their sector, aid and development NGOs in particular have been pushed to re-orientated how they engage their public audiences. Unlike the representational tropes discussed above, post-humanitarian communication is based less on photorealist depictions, deploying instead a more 'playful' aesthetic (Chouliaraki 2013; Madianou, 2013). Often the Global South 'Other' may not even be present within these representations. Instead, Chouliaraki (2013) highlights the increased role that animation and digital technology plays within representations. For example, mobile apps, digital storyboards and animated narratives are some of representational tropes identified in post-humanitarian messages.

Post-humanitarian representations look to promote a spectator-orientated connection; response is promoted through promises of Global South gratitude and/or the gaining of self-benefitting reward (Chouliaraki, 2013; 2010). Post-humanitarian communication highlights a move in moral logic from sympathy and pity to the ironic self-promotion of oneself. Instead, post-humanitarianism focuses of facilitating a viewer's identification as a morally good citizen (Chouliaraki, 2013; Madianou, 2013). Madianou (2013) demonstrates that this self-actualisation emerges as the spectator becomes prioritised within the narrative; a social media re-post or the buying of a cause-related product acts as a public signifier of the spectator's moral character. However, throughout these connections the spectator's agency is centralised within campaigns often at the expense of any engagement with the Global South. In terms of spectator connection to a distant 'Other' (or cause of a distant 'Other'), the self-actualised interaction prompted by post-humanitarianism can be problematic for engagement (Christensen, 2011; Morozov, 2012). Similar to the issues of suffering and positive imagery, Chouliaraki (2013) suggests the fleeting engagement facilitated in post-humanitarian representations do very little to understand causality or complexity. Madianou (2013) noted that the massive mobilisation of public engagement with the *'Kony 2012'* campaign did not equate to an engagement with the issues or causes of the conflict or indeed a connection to the children. In addition to this, while not all messages are based online, one of the key criticisms confronting post-humanitarianism is its tendency to fall into the sphere of 'slacktivism' (see also section 3.5 below)

Thus, the capacity of geographical imaginaries to inform public understandings and responses, is inherently linked to a mediation of the spectator's position and the representational tropes that depict a distant 'Other'. In terms of creating connections between distant strangers that promote critical engagement, it can be said that these three dominant visual tropes are deeply

problematic. Embedded within dominant discourse is a promotion of compassion to oblige a response (usually in the form of donations) from Global North publics. Mediations of the Global South are subsumed by emotive-based connections that prioritise uncritical and fleeting engagement, at the expense of a more critically reflexive connection. In the context of this research, it was the mediation of these connections that informed the understandings of poverty, aid and public responsibility promoted by the websites. As a result, examining the imaginaries that mediated the relationship between the websites' user and the Global South 'Other' was crucial to understanding how the case study NGOs prioritised knowledge and connections, while marginalising others. Moreover, considerations focusing on the possibilities and challenges for critical engagement with issues such as global inequality and injustice, required a challenging of these 'weaker' connections promoted within hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South 'Other'.

2.4 Mediating Global Citizenship & Public Engagement

Critiques on the challenges posed to critical public engagement highlight the role of mediated representations of distant places in shaping emotive-based public understandings (Chouliaraki and Stolic 2017; Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). As noted above, dominant mediations of distance and difference that maintains the privileged comfort of the viewer promote uncritical knowledge regarding causality of suffering in the Global South. Representational tropes such as suffering, positive imagery or post-humanitarianism are all utilised to produce the hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South that plead to a publics' compassion and generosity. Within such dominant representations however, critical self-reflexivity on issues of global inequality becomes inhibited consequently. Through compassion-based representations of the Global South for example, imaginaries of helplessness and victimhood are reinforced; dominant framings of difference therefore remain unchallenged. As such, knowledge de-historicises and de-contextualises the experience of suffering from the socio-political and economic structures that contribute to it (Andreotti, 2006). By extension such mediations reflect Andreotti's (2006) soft understandings: the reductive and over-simplified explanations of inequality and suffering in the Global South that dominate public engagement with global poverty. For, Andreotti (2006) 'soft understandings' are the uncritical and simplified narratives utilised to explain issues of global inequality. Soft understandings generally frame root causes of global inequality as an internal problem rooted in imaginaries of cultural inferiority and/or helplessness.

Moreover, Andreotti (2016) notes that the continuous performance of these narratives within the public sphere, has come to naturalise a cognitive frame for the public through which they understand ideas of inequality, suffering, crisis and intervention. As a result, the dominant narratives engaging the public with suffering and humanitarian crises are largely decontextualised and dehistoricised from dominant global politico-economic priorities. Dominant discourses associated with global poverty and humanitarian crises have been found to prioritise uncritical understandings of causality (see Keenaghan & Reilly 2017; Dogra 2014). Poverty and inequality have continuously been tied to grand 'soft' narratives of corrupt overseas' governments, primitive cultures/lifestyles and/or extreme events associated with conflict or climate catastrophe. Underpinning these are hegemonic imaginaries that have maintained and prioritised emotive depictions of helplessness and passivity among distant suffering 'Others'. Such imaginaries therefore challenge notions of a more critically engaged global citizenship, in that the public engage with narratives of distant suffering on an emotive and/or superficial level that maintains their comfort and privilege (Andreotti 2006; Chouliaraki 2013).

On the other hand, Andreotti (2006) argues that a more critical justice-based engagement within global inequality can only occur when the connections between Northern lifestyles, political and economic structures, and the experience of suffering depicted. In addition, Chouliaraki (2013) suggests that a critically informed audience can emerge when the distance between audience and sufferer remains obvious, rather than the reductive exercise of aesthetically closing the distance through tropes of representation (see Wells, 2013). From a geographical perspective, relational thinking of space (Darling, 2009; Massey, 2007) provides an interesting means for considering how geographical imaginaries might influence such critical public understandings. As noted previously, hegemonic imaginaries reproduce inequalities and stereotypes and as a result soft understanding of poverty are perpetuated. The lack of stronger, 'thicker' connections is prompted through the dominance of decontextualised and dehistoricised imaginaries of the Global South (Gregory, 2005). Conversely, critically reflexive understandings of aid and development then may be promoted where stronger relational imaginaries of place emerge, prompted by a more contextualised and historicised geography of distant strangers.

In here relational conceptualisation of space holds important potential for disrupting mediations of hegemonic imaginaries of distant people and places. Although focused on spatial geographies, Massey (2007; 1993) centres the concept on the argument that identities and space

should be considered less in terms of internal histories and cultures (i.e. hegemonic geographies), considering instead all the social relations and interactions that take place within and across the boundaries of space. In doing so, Massey (1993, p.66) argues "*this allows a sense of space which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local*". For Massey (1993; 2007) societies become identified through its linkages and relations to other places, therefore they are fluid and ever-changing. Through relational politics, and informed by a postcolonial critique, Massey (2007) demonstrates how responsibility is not only inherent within links between specific locations, but within the global dynamics that create and perpetuate inequalities. Thus, such relational thinking can also potentially inform the production of alternative mediations of distant place; the reductive connections of global injustice and inequalities frame soft understandings that may be challenged. Mediations of distant strangers, framed by relational thinking, can potentially rearticulate the distance between Global North publics and Global South communities, challenging uncritical emotive-based connections that characterise critique of much compassion discourse. As are result, this thesis considered critical public engagement through the lens of relational thinking.

Building on this, Darling (2009) argues that the relational framing of geography developed by Massey can trouble conventional public engagement with distant strangers (like those between Global North publics and the Global South), and therefore challenge the types of public responsibility it perpetuates. Darling (2009) suggests that a relational reading of the world demands recognition that responsibility for distant 'Others' not only emerges from an ethical obligation to relieve suffering (i.e. compassionate responses), but by virtue of our living in, and benefiting from, unequal and unjust global systems. Crucially for the context of this thesis, this relational perspective of place builds on similar ideas of Andreotti's (2006) critical global citizenship; a relational perspective inherently carries an engagement with global responsibilities, and therefore offers potential for engagement with themes of justice and citizenship. A relational mediation of Global South suffering for example can establish a proximity in that it draws a much thicker connection between Global North and Global South communities. In line with a critical approach to engagement with global poverty, relational may encourage a more self-reflexive consideration; publics are encouraged to consider their own position within unfair and unequal structures and the taken-for-granted assumptions that contribute to the perpetuation of inequality (Andreotti, 2016).

However, Darling (2009) acknowledges critiques of Massey's (2007; 1993) concept of relationality; concerns arose that relational thinking cannot disrupt a normative hierarchical organisation of responsibility that still prioritises the 'local' (see May et al., 2007). In the context of aid and development communication, compassion for distant 'Others' may be the limit of what some spectators can feel for Global South 'Others' for example. As such, Darling (2009) notes that relational responsibility does not equate to a motivation to respond; thinking relationally about global inequality or injustice will not guarantee a motivation to critical engage for example. Nor does relational thinking inherently promote a self-reflexive responsibility based on accountability or causal connection. In other words, relational framing of distant suffering does not implicitly promote a sense of connection in a way that is inherently different to compassion and generosity. Yet, Darling (2009) insists that this does not reduce the potential for relational responsibility to inform a more ethical and accountable connection to distant 'Others'. Instead it is suggested (Darling, 2009) that more focus needs to be paid to the sites of encounters themselves (i.e. the instances where Global North publics 'meet' Global South communities in the context of aid and development discourse). Darling (2009) suggests that these encounters can create the networks and responsibilities that relational thinking advocates for; connections and causalities may be rendered visible in the material that mediates Global North engagement with distant strangers. A relational account of mediating the Global South 'Other', therefore provided an opportunity to approach the mediation of distant suffering that incorporates ideas of Global North responsibility; thus challenging the emotive based connections that perpetuate a contemporary unequal global order.

In terms of the objectives of this research, the conceptual overlap between Darling's (2009) relational thinking and Andreotti's (2006) critical global citizenship highlighted a space for disrupting dominant public understandings of aid and development. Within this space, drawing on relational connection(s) between distant Global South 'Others' and Global North publics, examined the potential for a more critical and self-reflexive understanding of global inequality. The conceptualisation of relational thinking highlights similar arguments made in Andreotti's (2006) discussions of critical global citizenship. Andreotti (2006) has explored how critical global citizenship can disrupt the power, distance and difference triad, and its impact upon notions of responsibility. This is in line with the key principle of relational responsibility, where Darling (2009, p.1950) argues for relational responsibility to be "*a demand to intervene […] to contest the current configuration of global flows, territories and injustices*". Thus, considerations about the websites' production of alternative discourse drew on this conceptual

alignment; relational connections disrupt reductive geographical imaginaries, and instead encourages audiences to critically engage with the limits of emotive-based 'connections'. As Massey (2007, p.66) argues, relational connections provide *"a way of encouraging a politics, and even more fundamentally a sensibility, that is outward looking. A different kind of geographical imagination*". How such connections can be promoted through Global South representations required considerations around the production of counter-geographical knowledge (see Chapter 4).

2.5 Mediated Public Engagement: The Internet & Digital Platforms

With a focus on NGO websites, this thesis examined how the framing of public imaginaries of aid and development require an additional layer of consideration in relation to digital platforms, and the impact these may have on the representation and mediation of distance. In doing so, the research draws from the ever-expanding 'discipline turn' within geography towards digital geographies. Of particular relevance to this research is work unpacking the role digital technologies can have in producing and representing what Young (2019) refers to as 'digital knowledge politics'. Here, geographers (see Young, 2019; Rose, 2019; Ash, 2019; Purcell, 2014) note the practices through which digital technologies can include and exclude knowledge; digital knowledge politics therefore informs the prioritisation and marginalisation of knowledge through websites. Meanwhile in terms of research focusing on aid and development communication, the role of digital platforms has also been subject to growing analytical scope. Studies have predominantly focused on reviewing the use of social media by NGOs (see Armstrong and Butcher, 2018; Waters and Jamal, 2011; Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton, 2012), or examining the impact social media campaigns have on NGO public engagement objectives (see Yang and Saffer, 2018; Madianou, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2013). Where research does exist on the role of digital platforms in public engagement and activism, aid and development has been relatively excluded from such discussions. Thus, in both digital geographical scholarship and development studies, comparatively less research attention has been paid to unpacking the implications of digital platforms on mediated representations of the Global South, or any subsequent framing of public understandings of global inequality.

Digital geographers argue that the proliferation of digital technology in society has transformed the mediation of social relations, identities and practices; that is not to say that they have

transformed social norms however (Young, 2019). Digital networks have contributed a "*small-world effect that has altered our perception of distance, impacting how we understand our encounter with distant people and places*" (Young, 2019, p.270). Despite this capacity for bridging the distance, digital technology is said to reinforce dominant social practices and relations (Young, 2019; Rose, 2019). The extent to which knowledge is prioritised or marginalised is mitigated by digital knowledge politics; these politics more-often-than-not reflect the dominant social norms within broader (offline) society. This reflects a similar line of discussions regarding digital activism, and the internet's capacity to facilitate social engagement that challenges unequal or unjust social norms (Hirsch, 2014; Gladwell, 2010). Within such work, discussion about such capacity generally occurs along a risk/cost nexus; different types of engagement contain higher risk and cost to participants, and this will influence the likelihood of them participating (van Laer and van Aelst, 2010). Much of this risk/cost nexus within both internet-based and internet-supported engagement draws on McAdam's (1986) ideas of cost and risk within social movements and offline activism. In the context of offline activism, Mc Adams (1986) was one of the first studies to link participant engagement to what the participant is required to do. This observation distinguished between low risk/cost activities and high risk/cost activities that remain key principles for considerations of activism and engagement, including digital activism. By cost McAdams (1986) referred to the use of time, money and effort invested by the participant in order to participate, and by risk he referred to the legal, social, physical and financial dangers that were involved in taking part in the proposed activity (McAdams, 1986). In this thesis, this risk/cost nexus was important in considerations forging connections with the Global South poverty that disrupts the comfort of the spectator.

Digital knowledge politics have been found to normalise marginalising attitudes that operate more broadly within societies; social inequalities and injustices are reinforced (and perhaps even strengthened) through users' engagement with digital knowledge (Young, 2019). Similarly, Rose (2019) also notes how digital platforms extend power relations that dominate the offline world; user-generated-content and participation tends to reinforce dominant (westernised) racial and cultural underpinnings. Thus, dominant digital knowledge politics maintain the comfort of the user/spectator by promoting engagement that is low risk/cost. The capacity for online engagement and/or activism that challenges dominant discourses within such contexts remains relatively slim. These discussions are relevant in the context of aid and development communication, as the rhetoric around eradicating poverty provides a strong

emotive urge for Northern publics to engage with global poverty issues. In contrast the complexity and reflexivity required for a thicker relational engagement with Global South poverty, is less appealing or comfortable. Instead within the context of digital platforms, an extension of spectator's comfort will therefore often be satisfied by sharing an emotive informative page on social media or online donation (Richey, 2018; Chouliaraki, 2013). For example, in considering participation with online campaigns, Hirsch (2014) notes that participants are less likely to get involved if effort and time is required to challenge deeply entrenched complex social and political issues. As Hirsch (2014, p.57) states "*we may abhor sex trafficking in Asia and Latin America but for most people the sheer complexity of the issue and the political capital that needs to be expended to put an end to it makes them eager 'likers' but reluctant actors*". This debate has been a constant and dominant theme surrounding discussions around online engagement; such online engagement has been accused of failing in its ability to challenge entrenched institutions and systems (Ash, 2019; Rose, 2019). Particularly with the growth of post-humanitarian communication, digital platforms will often fail to extend into any critical engagement with complexity or context in online discourses of aid and development.

In terms of actions facilitated by digital platforms, the literature demonstrates a general consensus that online platforms and technologies are increasingly altered conventional norms of participation and activism (Earl and Kimport, 2011). In fact, proponents of digital activism have challenged the role that physical offline engagement plays in modern-day activism; they suggest that the traditional idea of 'collective action' needs to be reworked to reflect online interactivity (Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton, 2012; Earl and Kimport, 2011). Given that internet technologies have transformed the capacities of social movements, the internet's capacity for public activism is an important consideration in the context of mediated geographies of aid and development communication. Not only do online platforms play a role in constructing and promoting knowledge, technology impacts the types of activism and connections forged between the user and distant 'Others'. However, Young (2019) and Rose (2019) have both noted how dominant perspectives of the world are more likely to be reinforced through digital-based activity rather than be challenged by it. Reflective of this, Lim (2013) notes that in order for online action to translate into popular (viral) participation and engagement, simple narratives reflective of more general societal norms are most likely to gain attention in terms of going viral and generating support. Due to the sheer volume and breadth of information online, paired with the short attention of users and the contained capacity to converse (in terms

of character limits), online engagement requires complex issues to be simplified (Hirsch, 2014; Lim, 2013; Gladwell, 2010).

It is light of similar concerns, that Van Laer and Van Aelst (2010, p.1146) are careful to avoid a "*naive internet-optimism*", and they suggest that the internet "*makes it too easy*" for participants (see also Silva and Syed, 2019). Van Laer and Van Aelst (2010) argue that some online actions often dilute the effectiveness of participant engagement, for example the numbers of 'likes' and 'shares' on Facebook or Twitter are less likely to be as affective or thought provoking as feet on the ground or voices in the street. Gladwell (2010) picks up on this aspect of participation to argue that social media and online platforms facilitates a reductive framing of user engagement with an issue. In contrasting offline activism with digital activist campaigns, Gladwell (2010) makes some observations about today's internet-based activism that was relevant to this research. First, drawing from McAdam's risk/cost framework, Gladwell (2010) argues that the activism most effective in challenging a status quo is rooted in strong personal connection and an associated high risk/cost. In direct contrast, the type of action as facilitated by social media, he argues often only succeeds in recruiting participants by "*not asking too much of them*". The charge here is that participants are not engaged in any activities that they would consider high risk/cost. This is troubling to any type of engagement with social issues as not only does it fail to challenge the entrenched norms held by the 'user', but it is also (usually) a self-affirming practice that brings about acknowledgement and praise from their peers (Gladwell, 2010).

In the context of this research, digital knowledge politics have consequences for how an 'online spectator' will engage and act upon the knowledge that confronts them about suffering, inequality and development. This is cognisant of earlier discussion around the mediation of distant suffering and the creation of spectator role for viewers. Szorenyi (2009, p.102) for example suggests that the imagery re-orientates the world to create for the viewer a "*visual centre for which the world is offered up for viewing*". As a result, the distant suffering 'Other' is not simply geographically distant but distant in terms of the remoteness from their comfort; it is this 'comfort' which determines how or if a viewer will connect to the distant strange, and subsequently respond. As noted by Höijer (2004) and Kyriakidou (2015), the feeling of remoteness from the distant 'Other' or discomfort can contribute to a complete denial of response. Dominant discourse tends to promote a fleeting compassion-based connection by drawing the distant stranger 'closer'. As a result, dominant mediations of distant strangers maintain a comfortable superior position for the spectator that negates any relational

connections or critical engagement. Extending this to the realm of mediation of distant 'Others' on digital platforms, low risk/low cost actions such as 'sharing'/'liking' content or online donation can serve as an extension of this global compassion discourse. In a similar way that suffering imagery promotes sympathy and compassion that is self-comforting in that it maintains the spectator's role, online actions of tweeting, donating and sharing require examination for similar concerns. As Morozov (2011, p.190) suggests, these internet-based (re)actions result in making "*online activists feel useful and important while having preciously little impact*". The internet's capacity to close the distance between distant strangers therefore can be critiqued in a similar way to visual imagery.

Reflecting this, digital geography scholarship has noted that digital platforms have had little success in re-shaping global social patterns (Adams, 2017; Purcell, 2014). In considering how digital platforms mediate action, Adams (2017, p.24) suggests there is a "*troubling gap*" between action and the impact we perceive our action to have; he argues "*we are afforded minimal understandings of the distant effects of our actions, while we are enrolled in networks that act in shifting arrays of distant locations*" (ibid). This was particularly important with regards NGO mediation of public response through their websites; the framing of the 'distant effects' of the users' actions would impact the connections promoted between user and Global South 'Other'. However, researchers points to the enhanced deniability facilitated by online platforms (see Scott, 2015; Morosov, 2011; Seu, 2010). According to Scott (2015) and Morosov (2011) the lack of disruption to spectator/user's comfort is largely down to Thus, if digital users are not de-centred from their comfortable spectator position, their actions may only serve to contribute to the dominant imaginaries of the Global South, rather than challenge them.

While online engagement is subject to each user and the device they use, in the context of this research, the practices engaged by NGOs to produce and promote knowledge and actions for users became central considerations. In particular, how the organisations meditated the risk/cost dynamics for their users provided clear insight into the types of understandings and engagement they desire from their website audience. How the Global South is brought into being through the websites' representations and facilitated actions prioritised a relationship between user and the Global South 'Other'. Thus, the extent to which the websites prioritise uncritical emotive-based connection or relational responsibility, ultimately returns questions to the context of the NGOs themselves and their priorities that underpin representations of the Global South.

2.6 Mediated Geographies of Aid and Development: The Ambiguous Role of NGOs

In considering the dominance of hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South and 'soft'/uncritical understandings of aid and development, NGO campaign material in particular is a significant contributor (Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013; Andreotti, 2006). Analysis examining NGO campaign material has noted how imaginaries construct simplified and reductive knowledge for the public relating to what intervention responses should look like, and the role NGOs should play (Vossen, Van Gorp and Schulpen, 2018). Beswick et al. (2019), Walton (2018), Vossen, Van Gorp and Schulpen (2018), Dogra (2014) Chouliaraki (2013) for example have all noted how fundraising campaigns and donation pleas in particular have utilised imaginaries of a helpless and passive Global South to provide an affective vehicle that encourages public support and donation. Paradoxically however, it is argued that such imaginaries place significant restraints on NGO work at grassroot level, where interventionist narratives marginalise considerations of context and nuance in donor expectations of aid and development work (Banks, 2018; Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015; Bebbington, 2004). Soft understandings of aid and development produced by NGOs, therefore have been found to construct troubling donor expectations of NGO work that ultimately limits the type of interventions perceived as valuable to crises and suffering contexts (Slota, 2018; Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015).

With regards the mediation of distance and promoting relationships between Global North and Global South, dominant narratives inherent to NGO mediations have been found to prioritise stereotypical representations of distant people (see Keenaghan & Reilly 2017; see also Sheridan, Landy and Stout 2017). For example, studies by Beswick et al, (2018), Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017, Dogra (2014) have noted the extent to which images of starving children are still deployed throughout NGO fundraising campaigns. Moreover, Dogra's (2014) examination of NGO management perspectives highlight that such characterisations were largely due to public expectations of what a 'disserving', suffering 'Other' looks like (see also Powers, 2018). This highlights a key determinant of NGO mediation more broadly: justification for intervention is based upon the vulnerability and helplessness (re)produced through such characterisations of the Global South, thus marginalising local agency and the value of indigenous knowledge. Hierarchically representing the plight of distant 'Others' is also deeply problematic in that it constructs donor preferences regarding who is most worthy of action and response. For example, Walker-Rettberg and Gajjala (2016) highlight the initial swell of public

doubt regarding the plight of Syrian refugees, and link this directly to the negative framing of male Syrian refugees within a post 9/11 context. Images of these refugees depicted in the media were not conducive to the public imaginary of 'what a refugee looks like', and thus they were initially judged less 'worthy' of donation/support, ultimately impacting the type of humanitarian intervention prioritised.

NGOs' production of uncritical hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South have also been found to reduce understandings of NGO work, prioritising instead depictions of quick reactive fixes (Banks, Hulme and Edwards, 2015; Bebbington, 2004). NGO campaign material contributes to narrow decontextualized constructions of causality that tend to reduce problems of suffering to a series of lacks; a lack of food, a lack of proper healthcare facilities, a lack of water etc. (see Keenaghan & Reilly, 2017). Consequently, these imaginaries frame relief and aid work as a process of addressing and replenishing these deficiencies. Slota (2018) for example identifies donor preference for urgent short-term impact as a growing obstacle for NGO interventions, arguing the problem relates to how NGOs communicate food crises to the public (see also Dogra, 2014). As a result, outside initial demands for emergency relief (i.e. preserving life), the dominant 'soft' understandings of NGO work greatly inhibit interventions. As Slota (2018) and Wall (2017) demonstrated, preventative work in crises (in famine for example) suffers significant challenges because the public imaginary limits the mediated narrative to extreme deficiency and urgency. Furthermore, the resilience-building and recovery work in the aftermath of crises is also hindered by the reactive donor impulse to 'save lives' (ibid, see also Franks, 2013, Katz, 2013; Polman, 2010). Baillie-Smith (2013) suggests that in failing to recognise and communicate contextual nuance, mediated NGO campaigns homogenise aid and development landscapes and inform public expectations that marginalise everyday realities of NGO work.

For Banks, Hulme and Edwards (2015) and Bebbington (2004), NGOs' uncritical and hegemonic imaginaries then constructs problematic expectations and understandings of what 'successful' or 'effective' interventions are; this contributes to a prioritisation for standardised programmes lacking sensitivity for local context. This has significant consequences for NGO operations at grassroots in particular, as these are primarily determined by the levels of income they receive and the sources from which they receive it. In her critique of the aid industry Polman (2010) demonstrated how the geographies of emergency aid follow donor preferences for maximum impact (see also Franks, 2013; Katz, 2013). As a result, the production of soft understandings underpinned by hegemonic imaginaries can become deeply entrenched in an

NGO's accountability to their donor-public. Not only does public donation contribute a substantial source of income to an NGO's operations, but public opinion impacts institutional support like government aid agencies and other co-funders (Banks, Hulme, Edwards, 2015; Bebbington, 2004). Public accountability, and by extension organisational reputation, therefore become a major element of NGO legitimacy and legacy concerns. As a direct result of this, an NGO's production of knowledge for the public is deeply influenced by a need to maintain trustworthiness, effectiveness, and accountability in the eyes of the public (Banks and Brockington, 2018; Banks, Hulme, Edwards, 2015; Dogra, 2014; Banks and Hulme, 2012; Fowler, 2000). As the demand for transparency and accountability increases, and given the dominance of soft imaginaries, the gap of understanding between public expectations and the work demanded of NGOs will continue to diverge. Thus, an insistence upon accountability to the public is a vital part of NGO legacy, but only serves to reinforce the power of these dominant narratives within the sector. In considering the central research aim of this thesis, challenging such power therefore required consideration not just for how dominant discourses might be disrupted, but what this disruption could mean for an NGO's legacy.

2.6.1 The Tenuous Priorities of NGO Communication

Public donor preference for standardised aid and development intervention therefore can be considered a function of soft knowledge, hegemonic imaginaries and the continued NGO production of them. The majority of NGO-produced material maintains the privileged comfort of the public donor, pleading for compassion and generosity to 'help' the distant suffering (Chouliaraki, 2006). NGOs often prioritise an emotive connection (through tropes like melodrama and celebrity witnessing) over critical self-reflexivity in how the public is approached (Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Chouliaraki 2012; Wells, 2013). However, as noted in the section above, relational responsibility and critical engagement requires narratives of suffering (and poverty) that situates rather than conceal inequality within the over-arching global structures that perpetuate them. Thus, a more critically informed public requires an engagement with, and appreciation for, contextually nuanced knowledges of global poverty. However, a more critically aware public audience informed with understandings of the context and complexity of any problem, has significant consequences for normative framings of NGO success. These questions ultimately relate back to an entrenched relationship between an NGO's production of soft knowledge and public expectations of NGO work.

As outlined throughout this literature review, uncritical and abstracted geographical knowledges (soft imaginaries) frame dominant public expectations and drive most

contemporary development work. The production and consumption of these dominant imaginaries orientate legitimacy and accountability in line with Northern standards and expectations, resulting in a standardised mediation of inequality and crises; an approach culminating in expectations of Global South helplessness and measurable interventionary successes. Subsequently, situated geographies, sensitive to contextual specificity often remain marginalised or altogether absent from mediated NGO campaigns. Given this relationship, engaging the public with alternative imaginaries that promote relational responsibilities and encourage critical understandings, may well pose a significant threat to an organisation's legitimacy and legacy. As Dogra (2014) notes, the level of critical and complex knowledge produced for the public is largely reduced because there is an assumption that it will be rejected by the public. This assumption reflects Britzman and Pitt's (1996) principle of difficult knowledge, whereby challenging what people previously understand (and assume) can pose great difficulty to NGOs and indeed lead to rejection (see also Britzman, 2000). Complexity and complex therefore challenge soft understandings dominantly held by the public, while also advocating for thicker relational connections (Chouliaraki 2013; Gregory 2005) between the donor and suffering 'Other'. This potentially presents knowledge and understandings that disrupt the comfort of a (spectating) donor-public. It is on this basis that NGOs argue that posing critical and complex knowledge is a considerable risk to funding (Dogra, 2014; Orgad and Vella, 2012).

Certainly, should the public reject alternative knowledge, the risk that relational responsibility and critical engagement presents is a significant and relevant concern for NGOs. However, research has demonstrated that assumptions on the public's intolerance for more difficult knowledge mediations may be exaggerated, pointing towards a far less passive public than presumed by the NGO sector (Scott, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Glennie, Straw and Wild, 2012). Dogra (2014) in her study of audience response, noted that while there was strong familiarity with the established genre of charity communication, younger respondents in particular were less averse to complex knowledge than NGOs assume. Findings from Glennie, Straw and Wild's (2012, p. 2) report on UK public perceptions of development and aid also determine a "*considerable appetite*" for more complex engagement with how aid works (or not) amongst the public. Furthermore, recent research from UK context suggests that public support for development and aid NGOs has been much less affected by negative elements such as scandals, extreme nationalism, and austerity, than commentators initially assumed (Beswick et al., 2019; Brockington and Banks, 2018). Therefore, although there is much more research required in

the area of public interpretation of aid and development discourse, a space is certainly evident for the potential of critical relational thinking to approach an NGO's public differently. The focus of this thesis regarding critical engagement therefore returns considerations to the organisational priorities that maintain hegemonic imaginaries and soft knowledge.

In her conceptualisation of soft global citizenship education, Andreotti (2006) suggested that it was NGOs' dependency on donor relationships (public and institutional) that negated a critical approach to their engagement strategies. Similarly, Fowler (2000) suggests that NGOs have been increasingly trading their civic value for legitimacy and justification due to their reliance on public and governmental resources. These legitimacy and public accountability concerns therefore highlight an issue of problematic and tenuous public engagement goals. Educational and fund-raising objectives make up two of the most consistent and dominant goals of NGO's public engagement (Beswick, et, al. 2019; Baillie-Smith, 2008; Lissner, 1977). As noted by many researchers (see Orgad, 2013; Henderson and O'Neill, 2011; Baillie-Smith 2004 for example) development education continues to pose an internal operational dilemma for NGOs; where the raising of awareness and engagement with complex issues often contradicts with the production of material for public campaigns. Almost four decades ago, Lissner (1977) had suggested that fundraising and educational activities within the NGO were ultimately contradictory objectives. Since then, researchers have continued to demonstrate how divisions within NGOs continue to emerge around public engagement goals between the education/advocacy goals and campaign/fundraising goals (Powers, 2018; Orgad, 2013; Henderson and O'Neill, 2011; Baillie-Smith, 2004) In the intervening decades changing humanitarian landscapes and sectoral contexts have done quite little to successfully negotiate both objectives.

In response to what Orgad (2013) terms 'intra-organisational' concerns, an NGO's priorities may vary and conflict between departments. More often than not, fundraising and awareness/education are those objectives that pose the greatest intra-organisational conflict (ibid, see also Dogra, 2014). Such conflicts often manifest within organisations' communication strategies when one objective/priority may gain dominance over another; i.e. the dominance of compassion-based imagery over critical engagement. Demonstrative of such concerns, both Dogra (2014) and Jefferess (2008) both found that the development education objective (or indeed the educational material itself) often get subsumed within a fundraising/donation priority. Conversely, educational objectives will rarely underpin fundraising and donation material (Jefferess, 2008). It was a similar finding that led Andreotti

(2006) to the demarcation between critical engagement with aid and development and a 'soft' uncritical engagement. Here, Andreotti (2006) argued that a discourse of charity promotes a 'soft' global citizenship whereby poverty and development remain rooted in ideas of dependency and need. Andreotti (2006) therefore suggests that 'soft' engagement not only informs charity discourse but also dominates development education material also.

Furthermore, material produced by NGOs is becoming increasingly informed by the broader marketisation of the NGO sector (Chouliaraki, 2013; Cottle and Nolan, 2011; Vestergaard, 2008). Researchers have identified three broad advancements within the sector that has contribute to growing role reliance on marketing and branding in their communication strategies. The increased volume of NGOs and declining government support, (Vestergaard, 2008), the internal organisational politics within NGOs (Orgad, 2013), and the growing role of corporate actors in the sector (Richey, 2018; Richey and Ponte, 2011). As a result of these developments, NGOs are increasingly having to expand their audience-base while aligning with new (often corporate) funding partners. For example, Richey and Ponte (2011) and Vestergaard (2008) note the increased marketisation of the NGO sector have led organisations to build their own brand recognition in order to promote their work. This is not only done through the communication of the brand itself within organisational material, but also through brand exposure in partnerships with corporate entities (Richey, 2018; Richey and Ponte, 2011, and Vestergaard, 2008). Research by Laidler et al (2007) highlighted how some NGO brands were as valuable as some of their corporate counterparts. As a result, corporations seek out these cause-related marketing partnerships in order to promote their own product(s) and gain positive advertisement; an NGO's brand therefore becomes an income generating asset. However, Richey (2018), Chouliaraki (2013), Richey and Ponte (2011) and Eikenberry (2009) have all suggested that in terms of engagement with the Global South this type of marketing can often negate the unequal power dynamics that corporations are part of. The growth of marketisation within NGO communication therefore has done very little for challenging the dominance of soft/uncritical discourse around Global South poverty and/or development.

Yet, on the whole, and despite numerous critiques (see above), research remains limited regarding how the public engagement objectives of critical education, marketing and fund-raising, may align; Seu (2010) and Bryan (2008) have both suggested that the limited scope of audience-based research has negatively impacted such considerations. Reflecting such concerns, Dogra (2014) noted that NGO practitioners' dismissal of critical awareness material in favour for donation campaigns was based on quite a reductive assumption of their public

audiences. However, in the context of this research's focus, it is apparent that formative motives resulting in NGO reluctance to encourage a critical audience relate to an entrenched relationship between an organisation support/legacy and soft uncritical knowledge. Inquiries around NGOs production of alternative public discourses must consider organisational/sectoral contexts where funding and legitimacy is re-orientated, and whether these contexts might allow for a more critically engaged donor (i.e. disrupt this entrenched relationship between organisation legacy and uncritical public engagement).

2.6.2 Alternative Imaginaries of Aid and Development: The Potential of Social Entrepreneurship

In the context of this thesis, social entrepreneurship represented a series of principles that have potential to disrupt the relationship between public legitimacy and the dominance of uncritical imaginaries. Reflective of an emergence of corporate actors more broadly within the NGO sector, the principles of social entrepreneurship have continued to rise in prevalence in regards organisational structure and/or approaches to interventions (Brady, Seelos, and Mair, 2018; Tracey and Stott, 2017; Halkias and Thurman, 2016; Santos, 2012). Of particular relevance are the conceptualisations of social entrepreneurship that note the principles that advocate for a sensitivity towards local context and a reconfiguration of funding sources Brady, Seelos, and Mair, 2018; Tracey and Stott, 2017; Halkias and Thurman, 2016; Santos, 2012; Dees, 2012; Mair, 2010). In the context of this thesis it was interesting to extract these working-principles of social entrepreneurship practice in particular, so as to consider the potential for challenging the dominant soft discourses of development.

LOCAL CONTEXT

A central theme highlighted throughout social entrepreneurship literature is that the local context surrounding any given social problem determines the response employed by the social entrepreneur (Brady, Seelos and Mair, 2018; Santos, 2012; Mair, 2010; Seelos and Mair, 2005). As a result, social entrepreneurship emerges within aid and development through a diverse range of approaches, with responses being a choice specific to the relevant social structures, community behaviours and any past interventions that may have occurred previously within a given context (Sundin and Tillmar, 2010). Social entrepreneurship theory holds that programmes of intervention are informed from the local capacities (and knowledges) that are available (Rawhouser, Cummings, Newbert, 2019; George et al., 2019; Santos, 2012). Therefore, local agency and knowledge become key influencing factors in tackling problems. Martin and Novićević (2010) for example detail how one social entrepreneur, Horace Tipton,

dismissed the conventional top-down 'expert' interventions, and improved farming methods to effectively increase the standard of living for Kenyan farming communities. Tipton identified that dominant NGO approaches to improving farmer's livelihoods had dismissed the Kenyan culture that valued community and solidarity (ibid.). Martin and Novićević (2010) demonstrate that through a blending of local and expert knowledge, Tipton ensured that investment was channelled into improving farming output by the farmers themselves, resulting in the farms becoming self-sustainable. Crucial to the community's cooperation, at the point of financial self-sustainability, the initial investment of money would be returned to the programme and given to the next farmer, accompanied by the transfer of knowledge and advice from a recently self-sustainable farmer (Martin and Novićević, 2010). This highlights social entrepreneurship's central argument, that local knowledge, agency and context can contribute sustainable solutions to social problems.

Theoretically, the value placed on local knowledge and agency would seem to have positive implications for the disrupting dominant imaginaries and soft knowledge. Advocating and valuing local knowledge as a resource inherently implies a discourse that embraces contextual knowledge. The context-specific solutions targeted by social entrepreneurs (like Horace Tipton for example) require a public support-base that engages with the complexities causing the problem rather than symptoms (i.e. where contextually nuanced understandings are prioritised over 'soft' narratives). However, while principles of social entrepreneurship in aid and development contexts are growing, the discourse and representation produced by such interventions is severely under-researched. The literature on social entrepreneurship also tends to be quite reductive in their assumptions about conventional NGO practices. The critique can often appear to be based in a soft conceptualisation of NGOs as opposed to the reality of their work. Thus, considerations around the potential of social entrepreneurship within aid and development in this PhD research needed to identify how/if their practices for enhancing local capacity in the field, contributed to a more a more contextually nuanced imaginary of aid and development for their publics.

RECONFIGURATION OF SUPPORT NETWORKS

As discussed in the section above, conventional NGOs' accountability and legitimacy are entwined with Northern donor expectations, ensuring public donations and maintaining existing expectations. This ensures the reproduction of the uncritical knowledge and hegemonic imaginaries of aid and development. NGOs demonstrate how reductive donor expectations not only define the type of work that NGOs are expected to do with funding, but

how these expectations also define the idea of what an NGO looks like, including what funding they should have. It is based on such constraints, that social entrepreneurship, through its various approaches and financial models, increasingly emerge from frustrations within more conventional NGOs. In doing so the theoretical principles of social entrepreneurship signal the clear intention to distinguish themselves (sometimes explicitly so) as an alternative development approach (Worth, 2019; Coffey, Dixon-Fowler, 2019; Mair and Ganly, 2015; Fowler, 2013; Dees, 2012). The focus on disrupting the conventional was particularly important to consider in this thesis, given how hegemony and universality hinders discourse in and of aid and development work, but dominant interventionary practices also.

A common principle informing social entrepreneurships pursual of the unconventional, is the innovative and unconventional networks where income and support are gathered from (Dees, 2012; Myers and Nelson, 2010). Social entrepreneurs are renowned for creating social and economic capital across for-profit and non-profit sectors, in varied and diverse configurations (Worth, 2019; Kickul, Griffiths and Gundry, 2010; Myers and Nelson, 2010). As a result, organisations will have multiple diverse income streams that leaves them less dependent on any one source; something conventional NGOs have historically struggled to negotiate. In a direct attempt to circumvent such restrictions, social entrepreneurships remove themselves from the "*traditional and recognisable*" expectations of public donors, through the activation of a varied base of networks (Smith, Stevens, and Barr, 2010, p.287) Smith, Stevens and Barr (2010) suggest that social entrepreneurships build a network of support from like-minded people who can understand, appreciate, and trust the complex relationships and practices through which they tackle problems. This expansion of donor-funding (theoretically) re-orientates ideas of legitimacy, accountability and success; social entrepreneurship literature explicitly measures impact through the social value it creates for the individual and the innovative outcomes it produces (Worth, 2019; Kickul, Gundy, Orr and Griffiths, 2018; Santos, 2012; Kickul, Griffiths and Gundry, 2010). As opposed to being undermined or obstructed by complexity and nuance, a social entrepreneurship orientation of success, legitimacy and legacy *implies* a more critically engaged supporter. Theoretically this expanded network of support provides a platform for considering the production of alternative imaginaries of aid and development, and indeed the encouragement of a critically engaged audience.

The salience of donor expectations on conventional NGOs provides one of the greatest restrictions and poses the greatest challenge to a critical (and relational) public engagement with aid and development. Indeed, Bebbington (2004) pointed to how the (uneven) geographies

of NGO work are much more aligned to promises of successful and efficient outcomes for donor-imaginaries than to the real needs of those living within these geographies (see also Powers, 2018; Polman, 2010). Dogra (2014) has shown how this prioritisation of quantifiable success has manifested from and within the material mediated to the public. The dominant imaginaries have contributed to a propensity for quantifying and itemising aid and development work. Social entrepreneurship position themselves as distinct platforms, on the basis of challenging such conventional framings of success. Thus, the obstruction of accountability and legitimacy within public imaginaries of aid and development work is potentially overcome. In fact, Dees (2012) builds on such ideas championing social entrepreneurship's potential to create a 'better Samaritan'; a more critically engaged public supporter/donor who is aware and accepting of the complexity and risk of interventions. This suggestion that social entrepreneurship both requires and creates an alternative type of supporter however highlights the potential for encouraging a different type donor-audience and the possibility for a more critically aware engagement.

However, again such considerations reflect a tendency in the literature on social entrepreneurship to generalise conventional NGO work. Considering the mediation of critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses therefore raised some important questions of social entrepreneurship. First, social entrepreneurship requires a patient supporter who understands the value, time and complexity involved in programmes that yield sustainable solutions. It remains unclear within the literature how this patience would be mediated in contexts of disaster relief or emergency aid; urgent and vital interventions are mobilised through a reactive donor audience. Secondly, the theoretical potential of social entrepreneurship's varied network of income and support in this endeavour is apparent, particularly in how legitimacy and accountability might become orientated. However, the capacity of social entrepreneurships to avoid the same hierarchy of stakeholders that influence the discursive communication of problems, interventions, and donor supports also remains negated within the research. Thus, given the challenges posed to conventional NGOs by the dominant imaginaries of public donors, the mediation of critical engagement with complexity and context of problems was fundamental to any considerations regarding the potential of social entrepreneurship to produce alternative imaginaries.

Overall, the current existing research on social entrepreneurship is predominantly fixed on the debate concerning definitions and suitability of corporate principles in solving social problems. As a result, very little work exists on the discursive impact of social entrepreneurship principles

and approaches. In light of social entrepreneurship's theoretical potential, coupled with a critique of conventional mediations of aid and development, social entrepreneurship approaches certainly warrant a research agenda that extends beyond a debate regarding the suitability of profit-generation. Consideration must be paid to representations of the Global South produced by social entrepreneurships in aid and development contexts, particularly in light of the critiques outlined above regarding the need for more relational representations of the Global South and NGO interventions. Additionally, the discursive construction of inequality and injustice that emerges through social entrepreneurships' framing of social problems needs to be considered in terms of the potential for relational responsibility. It was on this basis, that this PhD research examined the websites of two case studies that reflect social entrepreneurship principles.

2.7 Concluding The Literature

The literature review demonstrates that the dominant discourses of aid and development are ultimately dependent on geographical abstractions of distant people and places. Research spanning development studies, media studies, critical human geography, and psychology all contributed empirical insights regarding the mediation of distance between Global North publics and Global South 'Others'. However much of these critiques focuses on the representational tropes utilised to forge relationships between publics and Global South benefactors (see Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2006;2008;2013). As a result, there remains a gap within the literature regarding how more relational connections might emerge through mediations of the Global South, and how such mediations may challenge the dominance of soft public engagement. Moreover, within existing geographical research more specifically, the role of digital platforms in shaping imaginaries of distant strangers still remains relatively limited. Digital geographical research provides a massive wealth of potential in the context of producing alternative imaginaries, but the extent to which relational connections might be mediated for Global North publics requires more empirical inquiry.

In addition, with regards the obstructive nature of such geographical imaginaries on public understandings of global inequality, the role of NGOs as a significant contributor of such discourses has been highlighted throughout much of the literature. In particular the tenuous relationship between NGO marketing, education and fundraising priorities have also been

considered in respect of the impact it has on the production of knowledge (Richey, 2018; Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Orgad, 2013). The prioritisation of soft uncritical engagement for public audiences has contributed to a troubling dilemma within NGO work is identified has drawn particular critique from both development studies and pedagogical research. However, while a critique of NGO communication forms a well-established line of academic inquiry, the extent to which the sector's diversity lends itself to a disruption of such discourse has been subject to much less scrutiny. Along with such considerations, the theoretical principles commonly promoted through social entrepreneurship literature provides interesting possibilities for alternative discourse. However, such potential has yet to be considered beyond the theoretical confines of social entrepreneurship literature. Overall, the gaps within the literature contributed to three broad strands of inquiry regarding the opportunities and challenges posed by and to NGOs by the production of alternative discourses of aid and development.

The first line of inquiry required an examination around the constructions of Global South poverty prioritised by the four case study NGO websites. The literature notes how soft uncritical narratives of poverty dominate public understandings, framed by hegemonic imaginaries of what the Global South is and who the Global South are. While social entrepreneurship's propensity for enhancing local context provided an interesting opportunity for a more contextually nuanced narrative of Global South poverty. Thus, this line of inquiry unpacked the narratives of poverty promoted by the four case study NGOs. How did imaginaries of the Global South frame knowledge about inequality, suffering and causality? Were themes such as causality, inequality and injustice critically unpacked and presented? Such considerations inform a better understanding regarding the level of context and complexity that promoted by each case study NGO in how they engaged their public audiences.

The second line of inquiry required a critical consideration of each NGO websites' construction of aid and development work. The literature points towards the deeply obstructive impact donor accountability has on dominant NGO mediations of aid and development work. In particular, such narratives shape public donor expectations, that will ultimately impact upon NGO work in the field. Thus, this line of inquiry looked to identify the discourses of aid and development work promoted by the case study websites. How was NGO work described within the websites? How was success and/or progress framed? How was the role of the practitioner and/or the Global South community represented? Examining the constructions of aid and development across the four case studies provides an insight into how organisations informed expectations

of NGO work. Moreover, such a line of inquiry provides empirically-based evidence regarding the extent to which social entrepreneurship's reconfiguration of support networks impacted the public imaginary they produce of their interventions.

Finally, the third line of inquiry considers how the case studies priorities connections between their website's users and the suffering 'Other'. The literature identifies the negotiation of distance within dominant representational tropes as largely contributing to an uncritical and emotive-based engagement with issues of global inequality. In order to challenge this and promote a critical engagement, the potential of relational thinking was highlighted. Finally, along such matters the role of digital platforms provides an extra layer of consideration in terms of how knowledge and activity within the websites will mediate connections between the user and the Global South. As a result, this line of inquiry examined the responses promoted by the websites. What actions were facilitated by each NGO? How did these responses construct and represent a connection between the user and the suffering 'Other'? How were such responses represented, did they engage specific issues or problems? How was cost/risk narrated within such responses? Did these responses promote relational connections or emotive based connections?

Such a focus facilitated a comparative inquiry into the production of discourses by each case study NGO. In examining the construction of poverty, aid and development, and Global North public responsibility, the potential for any of the four NGOs to produce knowledge that challenges dominant mediations of aid and development can be determined. In doing so, the thesis provides empirical-based evidence considering the discursive potential of social entrepreneurship principles, while drawing out some of the challenges posed to conventional NGOs by the production of alternative discourse.

3. THE CASE STUDIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Cognisant of the broad range of organisations that currently exist within the NGO sector, the case studies at the centre of this research were chosen to represent a snapshot of such diversity. The four case studies reflect a varied set of organisational structures, interventionary approaches, and financial capacities. As a result, the case studies provided a series of different objectives and contexts through which knowledge is produced for the public by NGOs. Analysis could therefore identify and examine the priorities that emerge through different organisational approaches to public engagement. In doings so, the range of case studies contributed to addressing the central focus of this thesis; the prioritisation and marginalisation of knowledge produced by the organisations reflect an NGOs capacity (or lack thereof) to approach a more critically engaged public.

The case studies chosen for this research reflect a continuum of characteristics and principles; these range between approaches that reflect the more conventional charity-based NGOs, to less conventional approaches informed by social entrepreneurship principles. The choice of social entrepreneurship was taken so as to reflect an ever-growing trend emerging in the NGO sector that Dees (2012a) and Dees and Battle-Anderson (2003) referred to as 'sector-bending'. Dees and Battle-Anderson (2003) suggested sector-bending as a means for understanding the blurring of non-profit principles with for-profit models that occurs within the NGO sector. It is argued (see Kickul et al.,2018; Kickul, Gundry, and Orr, 2018; Dees, 2012b;) that such sector-bending is a mark of the growing numbers of social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship principles emerging throughout the NGO sector. Thus, in order to establish a theoretical foundation from which to study the diversity of organisations within the contemporary NGO sector, this thesis draws on social entrepreneurship theory (Kickul et al., 2018; Rivera-Santos et al., 2014; Frumkin, 2013; Dees, 2012; Peredo and McClean, 2006) to consider the characteristics of organisations who mark a break from conventional aid and development NGOs. The rise of business actors and models targeting global inequality continues to be subject of much debate within development studies (see Richey, 2018; Fowler, 2013; Hilton et al., 2013; Richey and Ponte, 2011). However, within these debates, the role of sector-bending (and social entrepreneurship more generally) in shaping public engagement with problems of inequality and injustice has received much less attention.

First, building on the literature from both social entrepreneurship and critiques of conventional NGOs, this chapter also outlines the continuum of sectoral characteristics informing the choice of case-study organisations. Next, the chapter introduces the four case study organisations highlighting the organisational characteristics that make them suitable in responding to the thesis's aims and objectives. Finally, the chapter briefly outlines the broader regulatory and sectoral contexts specific to the four case studies in terms of their relationships with societies in which they operate from.

3.2 A Typology of Contemporary Aid and Development NGOs

Existing research on the contemporary aid and development sector highlights the tenuous relationship between the altruistic principles at its core, and the ever-emerging for-profit practices that have become so central to the sector's sustainability (see Richey and Ponte, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013). Within such a trend, social entrepreneurship theory continues to emerge, resolute in its frustration with charity/non-profit frameworks. Through various organisational approaches and financial models, social entrepreneurships emerges distinguishing themselves (often explicitly so) as an alternative approach to charity in tackling social problems. This focus on disrupting the conventional is particularly interesting to consider given the problematic role NGOs play in perpetuating dominant hegemonic public imaginaries of aid and development (Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2006, see Literature Review also). Thus, in examining the potential for alternative public discourses of aid and development, the case-studies for this study were chosen to consider (and compare) the theoretical distinctions made between social entrepreneurships and conventional charities working in aid and development.

In order to sample four case study organisations that would reflect such an endeavour, a continuum of organisational principles was created. First, a typology of core principles was identified drawing from theoretical distinctions made in the literature between conventional aid and development organisations and social entrepreneurships. Informed by this literature on social entrepreneurship, aid and development, and NGO communication, this typology acted as a broad continuum of criteria along which the four case study organisations could were identified. This continuum was based upon five key themes that emerged from the literature. These themes included:

Theme 1. The organisation's founding period

A central element to Escobar's (1995) critique of aid and development was the role of practitioners in shaping an international framework for intervention that dominates public imaginaries today. In particular, he notes the influence of Global North NGOs established during a post-World War II anxiety to develop and control newly independent countries in the Global South (Escobar, 1995). Escobar (1995) argues that the 1940's mobilisation of aid and development interventions through NGOs marked a period of time when Northern hegemony extended colonial practices specifically into 'the Global South'. Although researchers (see Haskell 1985) have highlighted a much earlier origin of humanitarian organisations, the post-war mobilisation of aid and development organisations reflect the origins of conventional the NGO framework that prevails today (Hilton, et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, social entrepreneurships (in various different forms and structures) continues to emerge within contemporary aid and development contexts. While the emergence of social entrepreneurial principles is not necessarily new to aid and development, the scale of contemporary humanitarian demand, unstable funding and growing concerns around public accountability has seen a renewed influence of social entrepreneurs working within the sector in the last two decades (Fowler, Coffey and Dixon-Fowler, 2019; Osberg and Martin, 2015; Martin and Novićević, 2010; Sundin and Tillmar, 2010). The growth of social entrepreneurships within the NGO sector therefore reflects a newer phenomenon; social entrepreneurship organisations being established predominantly in the 21st century as the principles gain more engagement both within development studies and the sector itself.

Theme 2. Income Networks

Income networks of organisations is another theme on which a distinction emerges in the literature between social entrepreneurship and conventional NGOs. Critiques of aid and development have noted the problematic dependence conventional NGOs have on donors to facilitate them in making social impact (Fowler, Coffey, and Dixon-Fowler, 2019; Dogra, 2014; Polman, 2010; Bebbington, 2004). These revenue sources are generally limited to public charitable donations, institutional funding and corporate/private philanthropy (Hilton et al., 2012).

It is through such income netoworjs, that researchers have identified the deeply problematic relationships that emerge between donor and organisation (Hilton et al., 2012; Polman, 2010; Bebbington, 2004). Various conditions, expectations and restrictions emerge within these relationships shaping (and restricting) the effectiveness of the practitioner (Bebbington, 2004). More-often-than-not due to their dependence on such aid chains, conventional NGOs find their resources are allocated (through restricted funding) towards specific intervention goals, this results in a low percentage for overheads such as wages, marketing, and innovation. Additionally, it is noted in the literature (see Bebbington, 2004 and Polman, 2010 for example) that organisations will often adopt specific principles and ideologies associated with their donor institutions. For example, NGOs within networks of religious agencies or networks like the Red Crescent will be shaped and/or constrained with the ideologies of their partnerships.

In contrast, social entrepreneurship literature identifies such critiques as a key distinguishing factor of their approaches. Debate around social entrepreneurship continues around establishing a definition and suitability of for-profit-generation in contexts of social problems (Fowler, Coffey, and Dixon, 2019; Kickul et al., 2018). One common principle however relates to the various forms that social entrepreneurship's for-profit ethos can maximise the capacity of the organisation to make the greatest social impact (Fowler, Coffey, and Dixon, 2019; Kickul et al., 2018). As discussed earlier (see Chapter 2, section 3.6.2), social entrepreneurships by their nature activate partnerships with a range of different actors particularly within the corporate world (Osberg and Martin, 2015; Martin and Novićević, 2010; Sundin and Tillmar, 2010). Regardless of the model, social entrepreneurships by virtue of targeting wider and more varied range of resource pools, will always operate on a more diverse base of funding than traditional NGOs Osberg and Martin, 2015; Martin and Novićević, 2010; Sundin and Tillmar, 2010). Thus, in comparison to more conventional NGOs, social entrepreneurships will often access a much greater pool of unrestricted funding available to build their capacity to make social impact (Dees, 2012).

Themes 3 & 4 Intervention Ethos and Accountability

Given the dependence of the NGO sector on donor funding (public and institutional), conventional NGOs are deeply entrenched within the aid chains that make up the organisation's funding. As a result, conventional NGOs' intervention ethos are often

goal orientated towards donor expectations or targets, sometimes they may even be contractually obligated to donor-set targets (Bebbington, 2004, see also Polman). Bebbington (2004) and Dogra (2014) for example have both demonstrated how donor funding has placed increased pressure on organisations to show their impact. This results in standardised and 'safe' programmes of interventions; Bebbington (2004) and Polman (2010) noted for example how NGO programmes often move away from the chronic poor towards more 'viable' communities who will produce the successful results desired by donors. Thus, the geography of conventional interventions become constrained by a dependency on public donation. Thus, in order maintain and ensure future funding (and the organisation's sustainability), conventional NGO interventions are deeply entrenched within a process of reaching targets and demonstrating success. This is often to to the detriment of overall suitability, sustainability, and scope of the intervention (Bebbington, 2004, see also Chapter 2 section 3.6).

In the context of social entrepreneurship, proponents of the approach (Kickul, Gundry and Orr, 2018; Mair and Ganly, 2015; Dees, 2012a; Myers and Nelson, 2010) suggest that the activation of a wider and more varied network of income support enhances an organisation's capacity to break with traditional donor expectations. As a result, it is argued that social entrepreneurs can target solutions that are not undermined by the legitimacy, accountability and efficiency concerns of conventional charities (Rawhouser, Cummings, and Newbert, 2019; Kickul, Gundry and Orr, 2018; Mair and Ganly, 2015; Dees, 2012a; Myers and Nelson, 2010). As social entrepreneurs measure impact based on the social value it creates for their benefactors, it is suggested (Hoogendoorn, 2016; Dees, 2012b; Kickul et al., 2010; Myers and Nelson, 2010) that an orientation of success is not obstructed by complexity in the same way charities might be. Moreover, social entrepreneurship theory (Fowler, Coffey, and Dixon-Fowler, 2019; Datta and Gailey, 2012; Martin and Novićević, 2010) advocates for an increased role of local context in the planning and implementation of solutions to social problems. Interventionary programmes are informed by local agency and knowledge, as local capacity is activated as a resource for ensuring the sustainability and efficiency of the programme.

Theme 5 Public Engagement

As noted at length in Chapter 2, research on conventional NGO communication (see Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006) have noted the salience of the donor, and the challenge that donor expectations and income generation place on public engagement. Top-down approaches to intervention, and by extension the hegemonic public discourse through which we understand interventions, has been subject to constant critique (Power, 2019; McEwan, 2018; Escobar, 1995). As already referred to, Fowler (2002) points out those organisations who depend on public legitimacy and funding are restricted in challenging public imaginaries of aid and development. As a result, conventional NGOs often reduce poverty and interventions into simplified problem/solution narratives; this not only reinforces ideas of charity as the only response to poverty eradication, but it dismisses any critical learning in terms of cause and responsibility (Andreotti, 2006; Chouliaraki, 2006).

In the context of this research, the public engagement element of social entrepreneurship is comparatively under-researched in contrast to conventional NGOs. In fact the context of aid and development provides an interesting platform on which to consider how social entrepreneurship principles can impact the knowledge they produce for their public audiences. In light of reconfiguring donors and donor expectations, social entrepreneurship poses the potential for producing alternative discourses of aid and development that may encourage a more critically engaged donor. Theoretically, social entrepreneurship principles inherently look to challenge some of the major influences that maintain dominant uncritical and stereotypical discourses of aid and development. In particular their principles around reconfiguring (donor) support and the role of local context within their practices. An organisational approach that advocates for local knowledge and capacity therefore holds theoretical potential for challenging such dominant development imaginaries. The inherent context and situated knowledge that is implied within such advocacy potentially provides a means through which hegemonic and historically dominant discourses of aid and development might be disrupted. As such, the potential of social entrepreneurship to produce a more contextually nuanced framing of poverty and intervention requires unpacking.

Overall, this thesis aimed to consider the potential for different contemporary NGOs to encourage a more critically engaged public, as such the production of knowledge through a

range of different priorities and capacities was central to this research. Based on the five themes above, the case studies were chosen to reflect a continuum of characteristics and principles that reflect broader trends with the contemporary NGO sector. Two case studies were chosen on the basis that they represented a series of characteristics where the potential of social entrepreneurship principles could be examined. A further two case studies were chosen on the basis that their organisational structures presented a range principles/structure that characterise conventional NGOs more broadly. The extent to which these organisations produce knowledge differently for their public engagement objectives, and the priorities underpinning such public engagement, are a central inquiry of this research.

An important caveat here should note that social entrepreneurship was chosen on the basis of its theoretically grounded principles and characteristics; it is not the focus of this research to evaluate the extent to which social entrepreneurship offers an alternative approach to aid and development. Instead social entrepreneurship provides a series of principles and characteristics that exist within contemporary aid and development, while also providing a range of possibilities to activate more contextually nuanced knowledge within public understandings of aid and development. As a result, the geographical distinction between Ireland and America that emerged through the choice of the case studies was not considered a point of concern in this study. The focus of the research remained on examining the extent to which (if at all) the different principles and characteristics informed the production of a different, and potentially alternative, public imaginary of aid and development. The choice of the case studies at the focus of this research was made on the basis that each of these four organisations presented a collection of different relevant characteristics and principles within their structures and approaches. An introduction to the four chosen case studies is outlined in the following section.

3.3 Case Study 1: Concern Worldwide

Founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1958, Concern Worldwide (Concern hereafter) is a charity-based organisation working on programmes relating to poverty eradication and relief in the Global South. Founded as a direct response to the Biafran crisis, the organisation operates both emergency response projects and development programmes through more than 50 countries. Concern's programmes target objectives under five main programmatic themes; 'Health and Nutrition', 'Education', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Livelihoods' and 'Advocacy'. As an internationally renowned NGO, Concern operates through their own field offices within target countries, as

well as through partner organisations including international NGOs and locally based partners in civil society and government. Concern Worldwide incorporates two subsidiary organisations in both Britain and the United States, allowing the organisation to access government funding in both countries. As a private limited company, Concern Worldwide as parent company can distribute this funding between subsidiaries, making them a key element of the organisation's financial capacities. Of all the four case studies in this thesis, Concern is working on a comparatively higher budget than the other three case studies; on average the organisation's expenditure equated to €158.7 million over the period of 2012-2017. This is almost 2.5 times the financial capacity than Concern's Irish counterpart in this study, Trócaire.

Reflecting conventional charities, funding activated by Concern predominantly comes from the general public and institutional funding such as Irish Aid, Department of International Development UK (DFIDUK), the European Union, Concern US (who access USAID funding), and the United Nations.

A review of the organisation's financial reports noted that over 25% of Concern's average yearly income is sourced from public donations (including corporate and major donations)[3], while over 70% of Concern's income is through institutional funding (see Figure 3.1).[4] As a result, Concern's income network signals a trend among NGOs more broadly that is often subject to critique relating its dependency on donors (see Fowler, 2002). In the context of this research, criticisms are often levelled at NGOs like Concern for the organisation's production of reductive donor expectations, and the impact this will have on the work carried out by their practitioners (Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). Hegemonic and

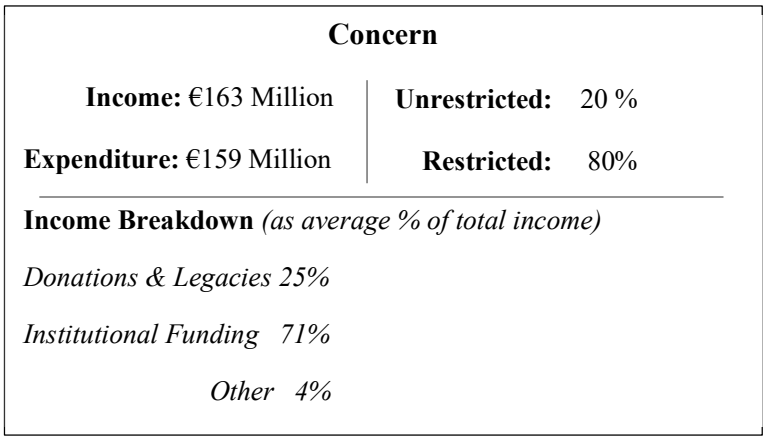


Figure 3.1 Summary of Concern's Financials

3 Corporation and private foundations only account for an average of 3% of Concern's yearly income over the past seven years.

4 Financial figures discussed throughout this thesis were on the basis of a review of each organisation's financial statements for the period of 2012 – 2017 (See Appendix A)

uncritical knowledge that frames donor expectations are entrenched within an organisation's legitimacy and accountability priorities of a restrictive donor network. However, Concern, and the organisation's associated (Irish) website, provides a useful platform for unpacking how and when such priorities impact an organisation's production of knowledge. Examining what knowledge is produced throughout Concern's website identifies the range of public engagement objectives pursued by organisations. Such an analysis is important to consider; the priorities that underpin Concerns public engagement will inform their capacities (or lack of) to produce critically engaging knowledge for a public audience.

3.4 CASE STUDY 2: TRÓCAIRE

Founded in 1973 by Irish bishops in Maynooth, Ireland, Trócaire the official development agency of the Irish Catholic Church. Currently, Trócaire operates across relief and long term development programmes in 20 countries. The themes and targets of Trócaire's work programmes include 'Sustainable Livelihoods', 'Governance and Human Rights', 'Emergencies', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Gender Equality' and 'Environmental Justice'. Overseas work is predominantly completed through partnerships; both alongside other Catholic development agencies as part of the Caritas Network, or indeed with other NGOs, state actors, or civil society organisations. Trócaire obtains funding income through donations from the public (40%), however the largest proportion of consistently stable income activated by the organisation is sourced from institutions (59%) such as the European Union, United Nations and the Irish and British governments (due to a registered subsidiary in Northern Ireland).

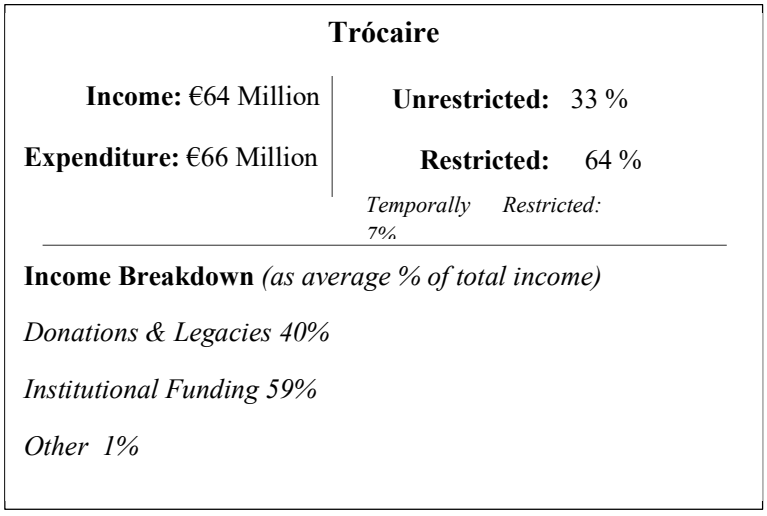


Figure 3.2 Summary of Trócaire's Financials

The organisation has a dual-faceted approach to their work; development and emergency work as well as increasing public awareness of global justice issues; this is all informed by a Catholic Social Teaching approach (CST). CST is made up of a series of papal and church documents

that delineate the Church's approach to social problems, as guided by gospel literature. Four interrelated principles remain at the core of CST (although many themes and sub-principles have been developed by different institutions) these include; human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity (Irish Bishops Council, 2019; Caritas, 2019). The first principle recognises human dignity for all as a basic and inherent imperative within society. CST affirms the idea that all human life is sacred, and that dignity is a god given right and should be respected accordingly. The second principle ('common good') supports the idea that individuals and social groups should be afforded the social conditions that enable them to fulfil their own needs. The third principle of 'subsidiarity' holds the belief that supporting those who have less should be done in a manner that respects their capacities and desires. Finally, the fourth principle ('solidarity') argues for an awareness and recognition of the unequal relationships that exist within and between different social groups. Here, the principle recognises that an interdependency exists within societies that calls for a solidarity that extends beyond compassion. Instead it calls for a more tangible commitment that is owed to those who suffer inequality within these social relations.

The principles of CST offer a framework to aid and development that shares foundational values of a justice-based approach; both approaches hold equality and justice as the minimum requirements for enhancing individuals' capacities (Sen, 2009; Parr, 2008; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen 1999). Separated from their religious underpinnings, the principles of human dignity, common good, subsidiarity and solidarity, all recognise that a just and equal society requires individuals to have the freedoms and opportunities to achieve a standard of living that they desire. Similarly, justice-based thinking within aid and development conceptualise poverty as an 'unfreedom'; issues of inequality and injustice are linked to constrained capabilities and violation of human rights (see Sen, 2009; Parr, 2008; Pogge, 2008; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999). Moreover, reflecting the CST principle of subsidiarity a justice-based approach to aid and development holds that poverty can only be addressed according to the desires and capacities of those who are experiencing the problem. In a justice-based approach, much like CST, an idea of solidarity and 'help' is extended past compassion towards a recognition of our own role in the unjust systems that contribute to inequality (McNeill and St Clair, 2011). Thus, CST values shaping solidarity and subsidiarity are reflective of a 'weightier' justice-based framing of poverty as a denial of basic human rights (Sen, 2009; 1999).

In the context of this research, CST/Justice-based poverty has potential implications for how the public is engaged with understandings of, and responses to, issues of inequality. Trócaire's

dual mandated approach is underpinned by this justice-based/CST framework; whereby interventions are based on grassroot capabilities and awareness raising in Ireland. As a result, Trócaire's website provides an interesting platform to consider how such a mandate impacts their production of knowledge for their public audience. This is important to consider, as a justice-based/CST approach inherently implies a more self-reflexive public engagement. Thus, how (or indeed if) an organisation like Trócaire negotiates their justice-based approach alongside the pressures of conventional funding networks can provide considerable insight into the possibilities and challenges posed to NGOs in critically engaging publics.

3.5 Case Study 3: Pencils of Promise

Pencils of Promise, based in New York, United States, was established in 2008 targeting the provision of quality education in the Global South. Currently operating within three countries (Laos, Guatemala and Ghana), the organisation works through their own locally-based staff offices in cooperation with community leaders. When a community is identified, often in consultation with national government agencies; Pencils of Promise approach the provision of education programmes and/or the building school facilities through partnership with the community. Target communities provide a percentage of building materials and form community-based councils to maintain the sustainability of the school's operations post-intervention. Pencils of Promise have also in the past participated in partnerships with other NGOs, but these are a less prominent characteristic of the organisation's overall operations than that of the organisations above. These partnerships emerge where the provision of learning equipment and teacher-training from third-party organisations have aligned with Pencils of Promise' school-builds.

Registered as '501(c)(3)' charity, Pencils of Promise access their funding through public donations, and donations from private foundations and for-profit corporations. In addition to financial donations however, Pencils of Promise actively access another source of support through forging partnerships with companies. These partnerships include cause-related partnerships, along with garnering donations of equipment/services from corporate partners. It is important to note here, that such practices are not uncommon within the sector more generally (see Ponte and Richey, 2014 for example), however Pencils of Promise was noted for having such partnerships as a consistent and centralised role in their operations. This occurs alongside a complete lack of institutional funding; over the last seven years Pencils of Promise

have reported no funding from government or bilateral agencies. This reflects a principle within social entrepreneurship theory (George, Baker, and Joshi, 2019; Hilton, et al., 2012; Dees, 2012b), whereby building a network of like-minded donor support, as opposed to accessing the support available, can allow an organisation more operational freedom. This is reflected in Pencils of Promise's financial statements which record an extremely high % of unrestricted funding; funding that comes with no contractual donor obligations. This reflects a fundamental distinction between Pencils of Promise and the financial structures of Concern and Trócaire.

Instead, through a '*For-Purpose*' approach to funding, companies have sold Pencils of Promise-branded goods with a portion/all of the purchase price being donated to the organisation. While other companies like *AEG Presents*, *Google*, and *Microsoft* have all donated to Pencils of Promise's operations, either financially or through the donation of technology and equipment that looks to enhance programme impact. In addition to this, the organisation holds one fundraising event annually (the '*PoP Gala*') as a marquee fundraising event to attract major donations. As a result of such funding networks, Pencils of Promise can facilitate what they refer to as a '*100% Promise*'; the organisation guarantees that the full amount of public online donations (and fundraisers) go directly to grassroot operations. The *100% Promise* on public donations is facilitated as financial donations from corporations, private foundations and the *PoP Gala* are predominantly utilised for governance and staffing costs. This reflects another (theoretical) principle of social entrepreneurship, where it is argued that corporate partners are often more willing to allow their donations to go towards governance costs and internal-organisational objectives that increase operational effectiveness (Kickul et al., 2018; Dees, 2012b; Myers and Nelson, 2010). This argument is on the basis that conventional expectations on charities expenses are entrenched within ideas of sacrifice and efficiency, and as a result tends to demonise higher governance costs or innovative programmes that carry a risk of failure (see also Lang, 2013; Hilton et al., 2012; Dees,

Pencils of Promise

Income: $ 7. 6 Million	**Unrestricted:** 92 %
Expenditure: $ 7.0 Million	**Restricted:** 8%

Income Breakdown *(as average % of total income)*

Individual 50%

Special Events 20%

Corporates 20%

Foundations 10%

Figure 3.3 Summary of Pencils of Promise Financials

2012a). Social entrepreneurs on the other hand actively look to invest higher budget proportions on staffing and the trials (and failures) of more innovative interventions (Dees, 2012a and b). It is thought that corporate donors are more open to providing their donations to governance and staffing costs than public donors (Lang, 2013; Dees, 2012a).

In separating public donations from corporate funding, Pencils of Promise demonstrates an interesting organisational characteristic distinct to Trócaire and Concern; whereby the organisation's activation of major donations from corporations and other foundations reconfigure their dependency on public donation. By extension this has possible implications for the disruption of dominant uncritical donation discourses that constrain aid and development NGOs more broadly (Dogra, 2014). Pencils of Promise therefore provides a platform for considering the impact that such a reconfiguration may have on how and why they engage their public audiences, the extent that this may hold potential for the production of alternative discourse raises an interesting point for analysis.

3.6 CASE STUDY 4: ACUMEN

Acumen Inc. (Acumen hereafter) is another registered '501(c) (3)' charity based in New York, United States. Established in 2001 the organisation targets poverty eradication through a social entrepreneurship model of development, distributing investments into other organisations (both for profit and charitable entities) who target social impact within low-income communities in the Global South. Through a model that Acumen refers to as '*Patient Capital',* the organisation utilises donations to make long-term investments (either debt or equity) into business models that target social impact. Investments are targeted towards organisations that aim to positively impact the lives of low-income customers/benefactors, through the provision of products or services that are both affordable and innovative. These investments target early-stage enterprises that are providing access to services under Acumen's key programme themes; 'Healthcare', 'Water', 'Housing', 'Alternative Energy', and 'Agriculture'. Acumen's intervention is primarily through the provision of financial investments and subsequent management support services to investee companies.

Acumen's investments are not always in terms of developing a product or services, however. For example, investment will often take the form of bridge funding that supports a company when it experiences a problem in cash-flow. Often Acumen will work with companies to provide them with financial support that helps them raise further capital from other investors.

In addition to financial support, Acumen's fellowship programme sees fellows placed with investee companies who can support the companies with technical expertise in sales and distribution activities. Acumen also supports companies in building networks with other relevant actors who can support the companies' supply chains and/or expansion efforts. Reflective of social entrepreneurship theory (Fowler, Coffey and Dixon-Fowler, 2019; Dees, 2007; Kickul, Griffiths and Gundry, 2010), the principle of '*Patient Capital*' is underpinned by the organisation's critical perspective of both charity and market interventions in development contexts. Acumen is founded on the argument that the markets hold a low tolerance for social impact companies, that either hinders their effectiveness or disqualifies them from investment altogether. Moreover, Acumen's investments require a sophisticated and well-developed business plan; investments are significant (between $300,000 to $2,500,000), they also consist of a seven to ten year repayment term. Any return of capital gets incorporated back into the organisation investment pool for other companies. However, as an investor Acumen has found that on average their companies have a profit of minus 20%; the top eight most profitable companies in Acumen's portfolio report an average of 6% profit (Koh, Karamchandi and Katz, 2012). Unlike traditional investors or micro-finance approaches, Acumen's expected return from companies is only a fraction over the sum of invested capital (Koh, Karamchandi and Katz, 2012). How Acumen incorporates such a perspective into their website's construction of poverty, aid and development and public responsibility provides an interesting point of consideration.

Acumen's yearly average income over the last 7 years has been $23.5 million, of which 94% per year has come in the form of public contributions (this includes public donations, corporate funding and private foundations). Similar to Pencils of Promise, Acumen activates a strong pool of funding through major donations from corporates and private foundations; in the

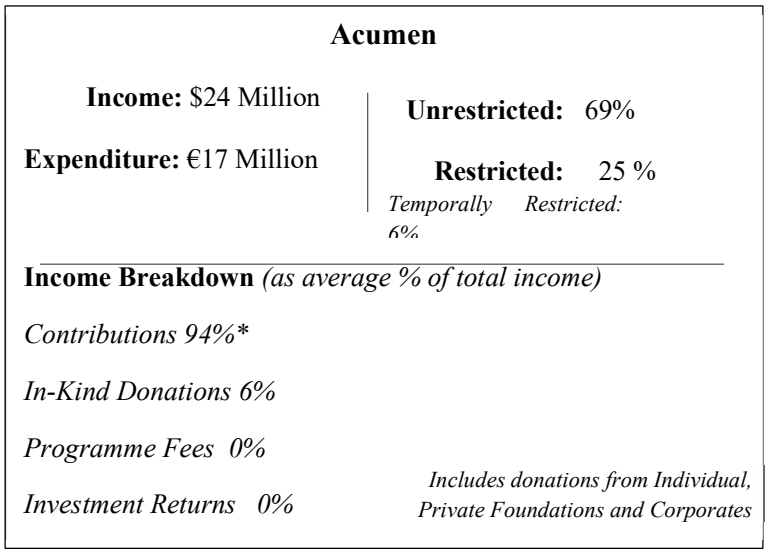


Figure 3.4 Summary of Acumen Financials

organisation's most recent list of donors Acumen reported more than 195 individual donations were for a sum between $10,000 and $500,000. Unlike perhaps the conventional networks of funding of Concern and Trócaire, it is evident that Acumen activates large donations from a smaller pool of donors. This may be by virtue of their approach, whereby supporters of the rather unconventional model of development will be corporate and private foundations aligned with similar principles (for example funders include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Skoll Foundation). Additionally, Acumen's organisational structure is underpinned by a complex framework of subsidiary bodies and partner organisations. Subsidiaries exist in India and Pakistan to manage operations within the regions, while an additional subsidiary in Canada activates local donations. Moreover, Acumen has formed three limited partner companies for the purpose of making and managing investments; under Acumen's 501(c)(3) charity status the activities of these partner companies are legally permitted on the basis that they extend the organisation's charitable objective. Overall, Acumen's income support network is made up of public donors, corporate and other major donors, and the organisation's own framework of subsidiaries. Similar to Pencils of Promise, Acumen therefore provides an interesting platform to consider how the reconfiguration of support networks and the unconventional approach to development might impact the priorities underpinning public engagement.

All four case study organisations target the development and provision of programmes that address issues of inequality in the Global South. Both Concern and Trócaire target long-term development programmes and emergency relief, while Acumen and Pencils of Promise's programmes focus on longer term development objectives. It is also worth noting here that while Concern and Trócaire emerged in reaction to specific humanitarian crises; both organisations were created during a period when market-centred policies of aid and development were eroding social welfare capacities of Global South countries (Hilton et al., 2012). Hence, both organisations' therefore emerged within a time when NGOs were emerging as key actors in addressing the extreme suffering and deprivation caused by unequal global dynamics. On the other hand, both Pencils of Promise and Acumen have emerged in a period when the NGO sector continues to undergo growing public scepticism (Lang, 2013). This has caused the aid and development sector more broadly to reconfigure and professionalise its operations in order to ensure funding. In addition to this process of professionalisation, donor accountability becomes increasingly more prioritised. As a result, sectoral frustrations are growing due to the restraints that conventional financial dependencies place on organisations (Lang, 2013; Dees, 2012a and b). Organisations have therefore reconfigured their donor

sources in an attempt to reduce dependency, and NGOs like Pencils of Promise and Acumen subsequently emerge activating alternative income sources and aspiring for greater freedom to pursue social impact with more unconventional models of development.

3.7 Regulatory and Public Contexts

As noted above, the geographical distinction between the case study organisations was not based on any methodological basis. Instead the Irish/American division of case studies emerged from the process of identifying suitable organisations based on the continuum of principles and characteristics. Given that this research did not include an examination of interpretation or audience, the geographical distinction between the case studies was not considered an issue. However, in comparing the production of knowledge across these four case studies, a short note to contextualise their public engagement activities is useful.

THE UNITED STATES

Within the United States, charities are set up under the reference to the *Statute of Charitable Uses of 1601* (Lang, 2013). Non-profit NGOs are under the governance of both state and national regulation. State law predominantly regulates for the charity's initial set-up, the organisational structure, and the responsibilities of directors (Lang, 2013). Meanwhile, nationally, tax and revenue law regulates the operations carried out by organisations and the funding they are entitled to. In order to become a 501(c)(3) charity (i.e. a tax exempt charitable organisation) an organisation must fulfil both organisational and operational requirements set by the revenue. This broadly involves an organisation setting out their tax exempt operations, while ensuring (and demonstrating through the filing of yearly statements) that the organisations' capacities have not been used to advance any other operations than those for which they are tax exempt (Lang, 2013). As a result, Pencils of Promise and Acumen operate within this regulatory framework that encourage the activation of different support networks. This is in contrast to the Irish regulatory framework that focuses on transparency to donors.[5]

In terms of public attitudes to the charity sector more broadly in the United States, Pencils of Promise and Acumen are engaging their public audience in an increasingly complex and

5 This is not to say that Irish charity regulatory system does not permit the types of partnerships encouraged by American counterparts. However, charity regulation in Ireland prioritises a culture of donor transparency and efficiency (see Charities Institute Ireland, 2019; Lillis and Hogan, 2014)

tumultuous socio-political context. Individual giving in the United States decreased in 2018, down 2% from 2017 (Giving Alliance, 2018). This occurred within a context where institutions such as charities, media, corporations and the government have all recorded an unprecedented decline in public trust (Edelman Barometer, 2019). Alongside this, in the context of attitudes towards aid and relief, a 2016 survey noted that Americans felt the country shared too much of the burden in international foreign aid (Kharas, 2017). In a review of different US public attitudes surveys, Kharas (2017) suggested that despite a long history of the contrary, public opinions on aid and development had now become polarised along partisan boundaries. The survey found that registered Republican voters demonstrate a comparatively lower support for US foreign aid than those voters registered Democrat (Kharas, 2017). Thus, Pencils of Promise and Acumen are engaging a more divisive public with regards aid and development issues.

IRELAND

Charity regulation in Ireland has undergone a relatively recent reform process sparked by a number of high-profile scandals involving financial mismanagement within well-known charities. In 2014, the *'Charities Act'* reformed and enhanced the regulatory framework for the Irish charity sector in order to ensure accountability and transparency, while attempting to address a loss of public trust (Lillis and Hogan, 2014; Connolly and Hyndman, 2004). In 2019 the *Charities Institute of Ireland* (Cii) reported a strong support for charities and the role they play within Irish society, this demonstrated a recovery in public trust following those high-profile scandals in the previous years (Amarach, 2019). However, the same report also noted that public support for the charity sector is deeply entwined with perceptions of the organisations themselves, as opposed to their cause (Amarach, 2019). Negative perceptions of charities' spending was one of the highest drivers of public mistrust of charities (Amarach, 2019; Charities Institute Ireland, 2019). Thus, while Trócaire and Concern are operating within a public context that is supportive, public perceptions of the charity sector are embedded with strong accountability and transparency values (Amarach, 2019; Lillis and Hogan, 2014).

In terms of Irish public attitudes towards aid and development, there is generally a high affinity to the work carried out by Irish NGO practitioners, rooted in the country's strong legacy of Irish missionary work in the Global South (O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2007). Aid and development NGOs within Ireland are some of the more recognised actors of the charity sector, having become signifiers of Ireland's positive contribution to international foreign policy (O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2007). Of the many internationally-recognised aid and development NGOs within the Irish charity sector, Concern and Trócaire are two of the main actors; public

campaigns of both organisations (*Trócaire Lenten Campaign* and the *Concern Fast*) form important part of the charity vernacular within Irish society. The most recent survey on public attitudes towards aid and development highlights high level of support for increasing Ireland's contribution to Overseas Development Aid (ODA) to poverty eradication efforts (Dóchas, 2017). According to this survey, over 80% of respondents supported an increase in Ireland's ODA spending (Dóchas, 2017). As a result, both Concern and Trócaire are engaging a public audience that holds an overall favourable attitude towards aid and development assistance.

3.8 Concluding Comments

All four case studies at the focus of this research therefore provide a set of approaches that reflect a continuum of organisational principles ranging from the more conventional charity-based NGOs of Concern and Trócaire, to Acumen and Pencils of Promise who hold clear social entrepreneurship values and characteristics. As a result, the case studies represent a snapshot of a sector-bending occurring within aid and development sector more broadly; where both Acumen and Pencils of Promise present a series of non-profit approaches embedded with for-profit models (i.e. through corporate partnerships and investment models). Knowledge production within these four case studies therefore can be considered through a varied range of organisational structures, interventionary approaches, and financial capacities. Focusing analysis on the websites of these four case study NGOs highlights a wide series of priorities and contexts to examine how constructions of poverty, aid and development and public responsibility may differ. In doing so, these case studies provide a wide-ranging platform for this research to identify the different priorities that shape how and why organisations produce knowledge for their public audiences, and what impact such priorities have on an organisation's capacity to engage a more critically engaged public.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research applied a postcolonial critique to aid and development discourse, highlighting the power of NGO representations, specifically examining the unequal power relations that construct Global North publics' understandings of a distant 'Othered' Global South (Jazeel, 2019; McEwan, 2018; Gregory, 2004; McEwan, 2008; Blaut, 1993). A postcolonial approach critically unpacked the political and historical power relations that underpin NGO-produced representations of poverty, aid and development in the Global South. The theoretical principles of postcolonialism aligned with the research objectives of this study, insofar as allowing the critical examination of the discourse that was produced by each case study organisation through their website. A postcolonial critique of the power relations underpinning each NGO's production of knowledge also informed considerations around the possibilities and challenges for alternatives to dominant development discourse. This chapter outlines the postcolonial principles that formed the foundation of the research and design for this thesis, and its critique of discourse within the NGO sector. Next, informed by a postcolonial perspective, the chapter also conceptualises 'counter-geographies of aid and development' as a means of considering the potential for an alternative discourse that challenges the power relations of dominant representations. Finally, the chapter outlines how the research incorporates Foucault's (1980; 1970) concepts of discourse in its application of a postcolonial critique of the NGOs and their websites.

4.2 POSTCOLONIAL PRINCIPLES INFORMING THIS STUDY

As a broad overarching principle, postcolonialism is concerned with the effects of colonialism, and the continuities of colonial legacies in contemporary global dynamics (McEwan, 2018; Gregory, 2004; Said, 1979). Emerging from the post-structuralist tradition in cultural studies, postcolonialism extended considerations around how power manifests through discourse, to challenge the power, hegemony and control embedded within a Eurocentric ordering of the world. As Bhabha (2004, p.245) summarises, a postcolonial critique "*bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representations involved in the contest for political and social authority within modern world order*". Thus, in the context of aid and development and

this research, postcolonialism challenged a Global North perspective of contemporary aid and development. Postcolonial critique also challenges the 'silencing' or appropriation of the voice and knowledge of the 'Other' (Spivak, 1999). Again, in the context of this thesis, a postcolonial critique looked to understand how Global South voices and experiences are brought to the fore in the narratives that publics encounter on a daily basis. This thesis engaged a postcolonial critique of each case study NGO website based on these two broad perspectives: critically unpacking the knowledge produced through the websites, and therefore considering how alternative and 'disruptive' representations might emerge. This theoretical framework was informed by key theorists such as Said (1979), Spivak (1999), Gregory (2005; 2010) and Toal (2010); all of whom regard the discursive construction of people and place as a core influence on the reinforcement and legitimisation of specific global power dynamics.

4.2.1 Performative Imagined Geographies: Power, Knowledge and the Global South 'Other'

Said's (1979) Orientalism highlights the role that knowledge production plays in the construction of a distant 'Other'. Through an examination of literary works presenting 'the Orient' to Western audiences, Said (1979) demonstrates how Western understandings were shaped along binaries of difference and distance. The Orient was communicated through stereotypical and homogenous representations of 'othered' landscapes and peoples. These representations were embedded with cultural differences that were activated through superior/inferior demarcations, framing the knowledge presented. These demarcations perpetuated binaries such as the West's 'progress' and 'modernity' set in contrast to a 'barbaric' and 'backward' Orient. For Said (1979) *imaginative geographies* are representations of distant 'Others' that are underpinned by Western political ideologies and priorities. Within these abstractions, distance is folded into difference as cultural and ideological differences are mobilised to produce the reductive binaries of Us/Them (Toal, 2010; Gregory, 2004; Said, 1979). In this sense, Said (1979) argues that such representations reinforce the priorities and needs of the West, and therefore could not be considered accurate presentations of place, but rather they remain abstractions. Ideas of Western cultural superiority framed the predominantly negative representations of the 'Other', and therefore should be considered as an exercise of control and dominance (Said, 1979). These superior/inferior binaries were produced and reproduced through literary works, including novels and travel diaries. Operating through both political and everyday discourses, these politicalised representations justified colonial practices within the Orient, to publics in the West. Thus Said (1979) notes the importance of unpacking

the control within representations of the 'Other' as a central tenet of postcolonial critique. This was important for this research, as the mediation of the distant Global South was a core element of how the NGOs construct knowledge about poverty, aid and development, and the publics' responsibility to respond.

Gregory (2010) extends thinking on the fabrications of geographical space to consider how these imaginations incur their meaning within contemporary media coverage. Here, Gregory (2010) considered the geographical implications of Butler's (2009) concepts of performativity; how practices and representations of people and place constitute a vision of the world that they speak of (Gregory, 2010). For Butler (2009) imagery and rhetoric that had been presented within the media concerning the prisoners of Abu Ghraib and the inmates of Guantanamo Bay operationalised specific frames of knowing and understanding the War on Terror. These frames produced and constructed public interpretations of 'Others' that were culturally and politically charged to support the priorities and motives of those in power. Thus, the frames within the mediations of the War on Terror constructed the interpretations that the American public held on the human cost of the war. Butler (2009) argued that American political and cultural norms that underpinned the imagery and political discourse of the Afghan war did so through a frame of democracy so as to legitimise the war and military action. Along with these considerations, Gregory (2010; 2004) argues that this performativity was informed by the continued performance of geographical knowledge through the media that conceptualised the world along binaries of democratic West/terrorist Middle East. For this thesis, the performative power of Global South imaginaries and the case study websites were important to unpack. Firstly, the websites themselves signal a powerful performative platform that representations of the Global South were produced and presented to the public. Secondly, the representations promoted through the websites needed to be considered in terms of the wider media performance of the Global South 'Other'. Both dimensions were important to unpack in considering how/if the websites' representations were underpinned by a broader discourse legitimising and justifying aid and development interventions.

Another key tenet of postcolonial critique of aid and development is the dominance of discourse pertaining to modernity and progress; this is the discourse utilised to justify and legitimise interventions (see Power, 2019; McEwan, 2018; Escobar, 1995). In this modernisation discourse the Global North's economic and social development is something not yet achieved by the Global South. From a postcolonial perspective, this distinction has clear historically rooted ideological values in the claim that progress can be achieved by the adoption

of Global North culture, practices and technology. Such discourses reflect what Blaut (1993) conceptualises as a '*Eurocentric diffusionism*'. In this concept Blaut (1993) focuses on how the world continues to be demarcated along an inside/outside binary, whereby European culture and ideologies were distinguished from their 'backward' and 'barbaric' colonies. Building on Said (1979), Blaut (1993) argues that such geographic abstraction depicted European civilisation as the source of all modernity and progress, while negating the extent to which much of this progress was rooted to colonised resources and violence (Blaut, 1993). Eurocentric diffusionism therefore captures how a colonial belief emerged regarding the inherent qualities of European life. Crucially, such discourses forwarded an idea of progress and advancement that erased the role that indigenous resources and agency had in transforming their own spaces.

Moreover Gregory (2004) argues that Eurocentric diffusionism is at the root of what he refers to as '*the double-headed coin of modernity*'. Here contemporary understandings of global geopolitics (including aid and development) are shaped along binaries based on a modernised superior 'Us' and a primitive inferior 'Them'. Gregory (2004) argues the performance of these binaries through the media and political discourse only served to reinforce an inherently imperialist conquest existing within geopolitical interventions (Gregory, 2004). In considerations of aid and development interventions specifically, Blaut (1993) suggests that Global South development and modernisation also reflects a contemporary diffusionism. International aid and development perpetuates a Global North perspective of social, political, and economic progress as a trajectory for advancement, while simultaneously negating the role of Global North actors or structures in contributing to inequality and justice (see also Power, 2019; Power; 2018; McEwan, 2018; Baillie-Smith, 2013; Tilky, 2004). Such a framing is underpinned by the performance of diffusionist binaries of 'First World/Third World', 'Modern/Traditional', 'Developed/Developing'. Therefore, understanding the binaries operationalised within the websites was key to an examination of how the NGOs promoted an engagement with global poverty and injustice; was engagement de-historicised and decontextualised for example?

Thus, in the context of a postcolonial critique of aid and development discourse, the powerful influence imaginative geographies is evident in the continued dominance of hegemonic framings of diverse regions of Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America (Power, 2019; Jazeel, 2019; McEwan, 2018; 2008; Escobar, 1995). These imaginings can be traced back as far as 18th century colonial discourses, where European empires represented cultures and

ideologies of the 'Other' to inform a Eurocentric imagining of the world that prevails today via international institutions (Escobar, 1995; Blaut, 1993). Such ambiguous geographies continue to shape contemporary understandings of suffering, vulnerability and poverty, and influence engagement and interventions (Escobar 1995; Said, 1979). The literature review chapter highlighted the role that imagined geographies play in how the media frames themes of inequality, aid and development; dominant narratives explaining suffering and inequality are situated within imaginings of Global South chaos, backwardness and/or violence. In particular, criticisms of imagined geographies within aid and development discourse pertains to the dominance of a paternalistic framing informing Global North understandings of the Global South (Power, 2019; McEwan, 2018; Escobar, 1995). Historically, media coverage of poverty and suffering has been embedded with ideas of Global North 'help' or 'assistance', and subsequently has reproduced an unequal power dynamic between Global North and Global South (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2006). This reflects a similar argument outlined by Tilky (2004) who suggests that that contemporary international aid and development representation reflects an imperial propensity for controlling the Global South 'Other'. While Baillie-Smith (2013) criticises the cultural superiority that gets reproduced through the dominance of such imaginaries when the media cover aid and development issues.

In the context of this research, a postcolonial critique of NGO websites considering the production and prioritisation of imaginative geographies was central. First, a focus on imaginative geographies provided insight to the ideologies and priorities that are being promoted through the websites by the NGOs. While secondly, the NGOs production of knowledge could be examined in terms of wider power dynamics that were influencing specific representations of the Global South. These considerations around the construction of abstracted geographies were particularly relevant to an examination of knowledge production around the Global South in the context of aid and development. The production of knowledge about the Global South contributes to the construction of identity based on difference between Global North and Global South; this is inherently political in that it defines a way of knowing, seeing, and doing interventions at the expense of indigenous perspectives. Dominant aid and development discourses are orientated towards a Global North perspective, underpinned by historically rooted global ordering that reinforced Global North ideologies and priorities. In line with Said (1979) and Gregory (2004) a postcolonial critique aimed to highlight such underpinnings, unpacking the power, priorities and values that they perpetuated within contemporary understandings. A performative understanding of development discourse

similarly highlights that the constant reproduction and performance of imagined geographies of the North and South, order and chaos constitute and validate such conceptions as the reality of the world. Thus, platforms which produce, and present representations of distant crises are important to consider for their performative influence in framing the wider aid and development projects. Aid and development NGOs as a significant producer of this material depict the Global South, poverty and development serve as an influential site that facilitates engagement by Northern publics with communities of the South.

4.2.2 Insisting upon Global South geographies

Another dimension of a postcolonial critique challenges the dominance and appropriation of the subaltern's agency. In aid and development discourse, the authority to know and speak for the Global South 'Other' by Global North actors highlights Spivak's (1999) considerations around the agency of the subaltern, or lack thereof. For Spivak (1999), the subaltern cannot speak due to the patriarchal and/or imperialistic structures that dominate them and appropriate their voice. Like Said (1979), Spivak (1999) argues that knowledge produced by Global North of the Global South should not be considered as a benevolent encounter with the Global South 'Other', instead these imaginaries need to be considered in regards the control and dominance that they indicate. Where dominant discourses have the capacity to demarcate and define a distant 'Other', it subsequently marginalises all other ways of knowing and seeing. Spivak (1999) extends on Said's (1979) work arguing that dominant discourses have rendered the subaltern silent; at best the voices and identities of the Global South have been appropriated by Global North producers, at worst the knowledge and experience of the subaltern becomes completely negated. An examination of the websites' representation of the Global South therefore aimed to unpack how indigenous knowledges, voices and agency were mediated to the public.

In the context of aid and development discourse, much has been written about the homogenous conceptualisations of place and people mediated through representations of the Global South (see Power, 2019; Powers, 2018; Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Baillie-Smith, 2013). Within aid and development discourses, the marginalisation of local knowledge (and voices) in particular has almost become normalised (Andreotti, 2016; Kapoor, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2006; Kapoor, 2004). For example, Loomba (2005) argues that the way categories and distinctions are taken for granted remain unchallenged within contemporary aid and development discourse. The power relations and social constructions of identities within dominant representations are not disrupted in contemporary coverage of aid and development

(Loomba, 2005). Mohanty (2003) is also deeply critical of this dominance that Global North framing continues to have on aid and development discourse. Mohanty (2003) argues that dominant abstracted demarcations that are rooted in Global North political power completely negates the context-specific experiences, identities and knowledges of Global South regions. Powers (2018) and Dutta-Bergman (2005) have argued that NGOs in particular are actively engaging in practices that marginalise the voice of Global South communities simply by speaking *about* them. Arguing that the rhetoric used by NGOs claiming to 'know' the Global South actually reinforces hegemonic notions of the 'Other', Dutta-Bergman (2005) highlights the crux of the problem with public imaginaries of aid and development. Within the dominant narratives of Global South poverty, aid and development, context and nuance have often been dismissed in favour of broader more generalised narratives that ultimately promotes a paternalism that continues to obstruct international response.

It is the dominance of aid and development discourse that is one of the primary concerns for Escobar (1995) and post-development scholarship. According to Escobar (1995) the representations of the Global South are so ingrained within the Global North's imaginings of development, that alternative ways of knowing are all but negated. Poverty, starvation, passiveness and helplessness frame the Global South, while development becomes the process by which these issues are eliminated, and 'They' become more like 'Us'. Drawing on Said's (1979) concept of imaginaries, Escobar (1995) argues that development discourse perpetuate a Global North hegemony, where the Global South is reduced to a decontextualised and dehistoricised space and diversity and identities are marginalised. This is where post-development and postcolonial critiques like that of Said, Spivak and Kapoor align: they are concerned with the power of development discourse and its tendency to decontextualise, depoliticise and de-historicise poverty and development. However, for McEwan (2018) a postcolonial critique of aid and development is distinct from a post-development critique in that postcolonialism does not look to negate aid and development practices altogether; challenging development discourse is thought to be better served through a disruption from within aid and development framework as opposed to the dismissing them altogether. Therefore, McEwan (2018; 2008) argues that a postcolonial critique of aid and development should aim to highlight the Eurocentric priorities that inform dominant ways of knowing and doing development. This reflects the concerns highlighted by Spivak (1999) and Kapoor (2014; 2004) (as well as Gregory (2004) and Said (1979)), dominant representations of the subaltern/Global South 'Other' amount to something akin to an imperialist appropriation,

whereby public understandings and imaginary of the Global South is produced by and through Global North structures and institutions. Thus, the postcolonial perspective within this study also incorporated Spivak (1999) and Kapoor (2004) suggestion that a postcolonial critique must consider the constructed nature of Global North encounters with the Global South; consideration was required around of how indigenous knowledges and voices were negated and marginalised through the reproduction of dominant discourses.

Thus, through a focus on the knowledge produced by the case study NGO websites, this thesis adopted a postcolonial critique that examined how the Global South was constructed (i.e. people, places and crisis). A central element to this postcolonial critique therefore aimed to unpack the priorities and relations that were perpetuated within the case studies' discourses. Such a critique was vital to any considerations regarding how otherwise marginalised voices and narratives might emerge within public imaginaries of aid and development.

4.3 Towards Alternative Discourses: A Postcolonial Framework

With regards alternative discourse, this study emerges from a gap in postcolonial critique of aid and development, whereby the production of alternative discourse has been somewhat negated. This thesis extends the critique of aid and development discourse beyond a call for alternatives, considering how alternative imaginaries might be activated by NGOs. The postcolonial approach undertaken by this study therefore also aligned with a post-development's call for a disruption of development *discourse* (as opposed to alternative interventions). However, as noted before unlike post-development critique, this study does not focus its critique at the interventions of aid and development practice, instead it drew on a postcolonial perspective that highlights the need to activate alternative knowledges that challenge the dominant power relations through insisting on situated knowledges. To do so, this research extends postcolonial principles to determine the possibilities and challenges for more transformative geographic representations of the Global South within aid and development discourse. It does so by considering the existence or potential space for what Gregory (2005) refers to as counter-geographies.

In terms of disrupting dominant narratives of aid and development, counter-geographies (Gregory 2005) provide a useful starting point in such a postcolonial perspective. In the mediation of casualties during the 'War on Terror', Gregory (2005) notes the potential for

contextual geographies to highlight the corporeality of people and place to challenge the otherwise abstracted and reductive mediated narratives of the war. Here, he argues that the that dominant mediations of US air strikes were legitimised and justified to the US public through abstracted geographies of violence, prioritising a reductive representation of people and place through maps and figures (Gregory, 2005). Subsequently, a contextual geography of the airstrikes looked to highlight the context and corporeality of this destruction. Similarly, this thesis argues that contextual geographies in aid and development discourse can highlight the corporeality of places that are otherwise reduced to hegemonic and stereotypical depictions. In doing so, a contextual geography of aid and development may disrupt the dominant depictions of suffering and passivity that 'explain' crises and causality to the public. This disruption advocates for a public engagement with (and subsequent understanding of) suffering, causality and intervention that is situated within contextually nuanced knowledge specific to the people and places depicted.

Moreover, Gregory (2005) identifies '*contrapuntal geographies*' as a means by which deeper connections between 'us' and 'them' may be insisted upon. In his discussions on US airstrikes, Gregory (2005) argues that reductive and/negative representations of the 'Other', promoted an uncritical and Contrapuntal geographies seek to render visible the complex web of connections between the distant 'Other' and the 'self' (ibid.). This holds potential for re-orientating the connections between the suffering 'Other' and the public-donor 'self'. Much aid and development media maintains the privileged comfort of the donor, pleading for compassion and generosity to help the distant suffering (Richey, 2016; Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2006). NGOs often prioritise an emotive connection (through tropes like melodrama and celebrity witnessing (Richey, 2016; Chouliaraki, 2012) over critical self-reflexivity in how the donor-public is approached. Contrapuntal geographies have the potential for activating the types of relational connections suggested by Darling (2009). Contrapuntal geographies of aid and development should highlight justice-based linkages between Northern lifestyles, political and economic structures, and the experience of suffering depicted. Therefore, this research argues that contrapuntal geographies provide a platform to confront the public with their own position, nested within a network of global inequality that contributes to the suffering of distant 'Others'. Crucially such representations could also potentially re-work ideas of public responsibility and solidarity, providing a means to encourage a more critically engaged and relational understandings for the public.

Counter-geographies of aid and development are introduced and conceptualised in this thesis as an insistence on counter-geographical knowledge in the mediation of distant suffering, challenging the process of abstraction and reduction that otherwise dominates aid and development discourse. In highlighting the corporeality of place, insisting on the context and rendering the complex (and often confronting) connection between the viewer and the distant 'Other', the production of counter-geographies of aid and development can disrupt dominant narratives of distant crises. Narratives of suffering need to situate rather than conceal crises within the over-arching global structures that perpetuate them. In such an endeavour there is the potential then for NGOs to engage (and produce) a more critically aware (donor) public. Thus, in considering a postcolonial perspective of alternative discourses of aid and development, the principles of counter-geographical knowledge provided the analysis with a theoretical lens through which to examine the potential for the production of alternative representations that disrupt dominant hegemonic and stereotypical depictions.

The promotion of counter-geographical knowledge in constructing alternative discourse relating to distant suffering 'Others' however, is quite limited especially in the context of aid and development. As a result, this research considered Toal's (2010) interpretation of journalist Maggie O'Kane's work as a means to consider the possibilities and challenges facing NGOs in producing counter-geographical knowledge. Toal (2010) demonstrates the effectiveness of O'Kane's reports for producing counter-narratives of the atrocities committed during the Bosnian War (1992 – 1995). The reports are examples of an insistence on contextual geographies that are grounded in the sites of violence and voiced by those who were experiencing tragedy, loss, and fear. By virtue of her proximity to the violence and those suffering as a result, O'Kane produced reports that challenged representations of the Bosnian conflict as an ambiguous flashpoint of violence. The resulting narratives produced another possible 'way of seeing' the war, moving beyond a careful scripting of geopolitical priorities inherent across media coverage and political rhetoric stemming from the region. O'Kane's willingness to maintain 'the sufferer' at the centre of the narrative is important when considering the critiques of Spivak (1999) and Kapoor (2004) above, and it reflected a vital criterion to examining the potential for counter-geographies of aid and development in this research. In this instance O'Kane facilitates the agency of the local in providing a space for personal stories and experiences to be told, with ownership of the narrative remaining with the sufferer (Hyndman, 2004; Toal 2010). Through an explicitly stated agenda, O'Kane worked the power landscapes of her sector (the Western media) as a vehicle allowing those she met to

"*talk back*" (Toal, 2010, p. 179). While her anger may have fuelled a desire to disrupt the mainstream narrative, the detail and experiences were largely left in the words and voices specific to those who owned them. The willingness to avoid appropriation therefore was accompanied by a practical capacity to ensure the experiences of those affected by the conflict reached the public sphere.

O'Kane's reports (and Toal's (2010) interpretations) raised significant considerations for examining an NGO's production of counter-geographies of aid and development. Given the entrenched relationship between an NGO's production of dominant discourse and uncritical public expectations of NGO work (see section 3.6.1 of Literature Review), could the case studies promote counter-geographies of aid and development? Engaging the public with counter-geographies that encourage critical awareness, can pose a significant threat to an organisation's legitimacy and legacy. The extent to which the four case study websites demonstrated an ability to produce such counter-geographies was therefore the second dimension of this thesis's postcolonial inquiry.

4.4 Foucault's Discourse: Knowledge & Power

A postcolonial critique of NGO websites therefore aimed to unpack the knowledge that is produced about Global South poverty, aid and development work, and Global North publics' responsibility to respond. In order to do so, the theoretical framework used for this research also draws on a Foucauldian approach to discourse, in particular '*discursive formations*' and '*regimes of truth*', and how they may relate to the websites' multimodal representation. Ultimately, Foucault (1972) conceptualises discourse as a construction of knowledge through social and political relations; identities, relationships and objects are formed through a selective assemblage of relations and practices within society. In such an approach to discourse, Foucault (1972) supports a postcolonial critique of how meaning and identities are assigned to people and places through discourse, and how certain ways of knowing come to dominate over others. Foucault's (1972) approach to discourse therefore informs an examination of the structures and relations that construct and maintain the dominant imaginaries of the world. This way of conceptualising the constructive nature discourse was important for this research design; public engagement and understandings about the Global South, poverty, aid and development was produced by (and through the performance of) the discourses that described them. How these discourses emerged amongst/at the expense of counter-discourses was the central to this

research, and identifying the opportunities and challenges posed by alternative discourse to the case-study organisations.

Firstly, Foucault (1972) conceptualises discourse as the creation of knowledge through the selective organisation of language. This theorisation marks a break with previously held concepts at the time that had limited considerations about the power within language to simply elements of linguistics and grammar. Instead, Foucault (1972, p.107) explained discourse as:

"constituted by groups of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence".

Here, discourse becomes a constructed (and constructive) force that determines the way a topic or object is understood; discursive practices are therefore not naturally occurring nor organic for Foucault (1972). Instead, the formation of a discourse ('a discursive formation') can be reduced down into a group of statements, and how these statements are selected or organised is imbued power (Foucault, 1972). Those who are subjected to these discursive formations (either by using them or described by them) have their identities shaped (i.e. controlled). Simultaneously, discursive formations reflect the power held by those who produce and reproduce this discourse (i.e. institutions, state actors, corporations etc). Thus, Foucault's (1972) power/knowledge couplet is complete. For Foucault (1972) discursive formations set the frame through which a topic, object or person(s) are spoken about and understood. The 'disciplining' impact of these formations manifests when dominant discourses set the frame within which knowledge continues to be included and excluded (see also Foucault, 1970). Crucially, in regard to thinking about counter-geographies Foucault (1972) highlights the importance of recognising and examining these dominant frames, so as to challenge them. In other words, an examination of the structures and relations that that create and maintain dominant ways of knowing, will also contribute to a better understanding of the capacity and willingness for the production of alternative knowledge.

In the context of this research, dominant understandings about Global South poverty, aid and development and public responsibility are produced through discourses underpinned by unequal global power relations. As discussed above, knowledge about poverty and inequality in the Global South is produced by discourses linked to power held by Northern political and economic institutions and governments. The (re)production of the hegemonic knowledges that depict 'the South' and the silencing of alternative localised knowledges, ultimately reflect the struggle of power relations between North and South within wider international geopolitics.

Thus, in this research that considers the case studies' production of knowledge and the potential for counter-geographies, this Foucauldian perspective on discursive formations was particularly useful. As it allowed for the unpacking of knowledge prioritised through the discursive formations that emerged within the case study websites about poverty, interventions and public response. Moreover, in understanding what contributes to the dominance of aid and development discourses prioritised by the case study websites, the space emerged to consider the possibilities and challenges for NGOs to challenge and disrupt dominant ways of knowing.

Secondly, in conceptualising meaning and discourse in this manner Foucault (1970; 1991) dismisses the idea of an absolute truth. In highlighting the constructive nature of discursive formations and their impact on meaning and identities, power relations therefore also contribute to understandings of truth and fact. Foucault (1970, p. 112) suggests that discourses professing a 'truth' are also an operation of power; he argues that "*truth isn't outside power, nor deprived of power*". For Foucault (1970) then, truth is also a construct and reflects a series of choices and assumptions that are ultimately determined by power relations. As a result, societies are said to have their own 'regimes of truth'; discourses that demarcate between the knowledge, procedures, and assumptions sanctioned as true, and those that are sanctioned false (Foucault, 1970). This also includes determining those who are 'experts' and the mechanisms and platforms assigned with the power to sanction what is true (Foucault, 1970; see also 1991). All in all, Foucault (1970, p.113) ultimately describes truth as "*a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements*". Therefore, within societies institutions and structures of power create truthful knowledge/facts and power relations sustains and reproduced such truth.

Related to this, Said's (1979) examination of Orientalism considered the discourse of the Orient as produced by Western world, this discourse was based on a number of truth regimes around the culture, history, and philosophy of the Orient. A colonial discourse emerged that produced a definitive way of knowing who the Orient was politically, sociologically, and culturally. Such is the force of these 'truths' and the representation of this discourse, its layered reproduction over time continues to influence present day conceptualisations of the world (Gregory, 2011; 2005). Central to Said's (1979) work is the notion that in presenting a 'truth' about the life and experience of the Orient, these representations came to create the reality of that which they described. Such power constructs can also be considered regarding the truth regimes related to the Global South; the continued performance of Global North/Global South binaries through media and political discourse has come to define a cognitive frame through which we

understand everything about aid and development (Andreotti, 2016). These notions have been underpinned by 'regimes of truth' about people, landscapes, facilities and attitudes that reflect (soft) explanations for what poverty is and why it occurs in the Global South. Moreover, there is an overarching inherent truth claim within material produced by NGOs regarding their claims to know what the Global South needs.

However, in terms of applying the concepts of discursive formations and regimes of truth to this thesis, it is important to note that Foucault's approaches were primarily based upon language. Given the multimodality nature of the websites' representation some additional considerations were required in order to account for the discursive capacity of the case study websites. For Foucault (1972) discursive formations refer to the continuous performance and reproduction of a discourse, to the extent that it manifests within institutions and social practices to assign meaning and identities. Extending on this, Rose (2001) notes that this conceptualisation of discursive formations extends beyond written text to include visual imagery; she contends that imagery produces meaning and knowledge through what they render visible and invisible. Here, what an image shows to the public determines how they understand what they are seeing. Imagery can therefore be examined as a socio-political construction; how imagery constructs knowledge and contributes to a selective assemblage of knowledge reflects a discursive formation (Rose, 2001). In terms of this project how imagery is presented throughout the websites facilitated an examination of how and what knowledge was promoted by each organisation with regards to poverty, NGO work and Global North responses. Examining the visual representational practices activated by the case study organisations uncovered how they seek to construct particular ways of seeing for their websites' visitors.

In the same way that Foucault (1972) suggested a group of statements could constitute a discursive formation (as quoted above), this research design had to incorporate (and analyse) the websites multimodality beyond imagery and language. The analysis required an understanding of the various ways a webpage could organise and design its elements so as reflect statements and form a discursive formation. First, websites as a whole reflect an (inter)discursive formation through the selective assemblage and ordering of webpages. Information selected for and presented on webpages reflected an overall hierarchy of knowledge and engagement produced by the organisation. This hierarchy manifested through the promotion of user pathways designed the user; hyperlinked buttons are positioned and designed specifically to move the user through a website (Paulwells, 2012; Kress and van

Leeuwen, 2006). The desired pathways of the organisation were organised through the salience, design and frequency of these hyperlinked (clickable) buttons (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). These pathways therefore are basically constitutive of the design and positioning of interactive buttons and the responses they promote. Much like Foucault's (1972) notions on 'statements' then these pathways could be examined as discursive formations; how they prioritised and marginalised particular webpages.

Secondly, the content within webpages themselves are reflective of discursive formation(s); they consist of a collection of written, imagery and hyperlinked signs that produce knowledge within a page. These elements are all organised in relation to one another to produce specific knowledge and facilitate responses. Here, units of written text, imagery and clickable buttons are grouped together to produce particular ways of seeing, knowing and acting. Thus, the design of the case studies' webpages and the content within them could also be examined for their multiple discursive formations. For example, they not only demonstrated a prioritisation (or marginalisation) of knowledge through the pages positioning within the hierarchy of webpages, but they also rendered certain knowledge and actions both visible and invisible through the organisation of imagery, text and buttons within the web pages themselves. Thus, an examination of discursive formations was the first Foucauldian (1972) perspective that informed this research's analytical framework; should discourse constitute particular ways of knowing, seeing and acting, how did the case study websites construct knowledge, and promoting responses for their public audiences?

Furthermore, extending 'regimes of truth' to a context of websites, this research drew particularly on the reference Foucault (1970, p.112) makes regarding the "*the techniques and procedures which are valorised for obtaining truth*". This reflects a related concern raised by Rose (2001) when she argues that imagery discourse is strengthened by the increased influence of photorealism. The camera then marks a 'technique' that is '*valorised for obtaining truth*'. This perspective on imagery in its own right was certainly important for this research, as the truth claims embedded within imagery had important consequences regarding how the Global South was communicated to Global North publics. Within a website, the 'truths' that populate the website material could therefore be considered through an analysis of the individual imagery and written text that composed a webpage. A less theoretically established yet equally relevant concern emerged alongside this however, this concern regards the extent that a website (and the internet) interactivity can or should be considered a 'truth valorising technique'. Web interactivity is considered much less constrained than text or imagery, in that the web user

enjoys a relative freedom in how he/she wishes to use the platform. However, as demonstrated above, a website's interactivity and design can be considered to have discursive-shaping capacities and be imbed with power. As a result, interactive buttons for example will prompt and facilitate the promotion of a select series of knowledge and reactions for the website visitor. In this way, the truth claim of interactive freedom must be considered in terms of how producers of online material can prioritise specific engagement pathways. It was therefore important for any analysis of the website to incorporate considerations around how the website visitors' freedom was impacted by design and prioritisation of pathways.

Moreover, a consideration of the websites' truth regimes also considered how the wider context of the internet and online activism impact 'truth' claims. Curran (2003) argues that the extension of internet into everyday experiences, paired with the extensive use of commercial surveillance, has resulted in the internet becoming a "*glasshouse*" of dominant societal norms and relations. Mainstream media and economics have extended into the internet and established a dominant network of websites and digital platforms within which the majority of internet users operate (Young, 2019; Rose, 2019). This as a result, has impacted how minority or in this case alternative knowledge emerges across the web (Rose, 2019). While the independent pathways and usage facilitated by the internet has proven to open a more creative democratic space, the power of production and performance raises an important caveat around that assumptions of the internet's access to knowledge. Curran (2003, p. 161) summarises the critique concisely when he argues that "*the net is generally used as an extension of everyday relationships*" as opposed to challenging them (see Literature Review section 3.5 also).

In the context of this research and considering the truth regimes of the case study websites, this highlights the power relations working through and within the production of discourses on digital platforms. In the same way that the truth claims of imagery were challenged so to could the interactions facilitated by the websites. Imagery contributes to an idea of bearing witness and thus creating an impression of 'closing the distance' between the viewer and the subject. In doing so it highlights the idea of an image imbuing 'truth' (and thus power). The case study websites were considered similarly, while 'clicktivism' requires very little from the 'user', the action of clicking to donate, or sharing and re-tweeting gave a similar perception (however brief) of reducing the distance between North and South. As well as having witnessed through the imagery presented on a webpage, the user was prompted to 'respond' and react through the interactive buttons accompanying the imagery. As a result, there is a similar 'truth' claim within this type of activism, one that is equally powerful in that it creates a perception and a

discourse around 'help' and action taken to ease the suffering of the 'Other'. An examination of the websites therefore also required the critical unpacking of how the website facilitated and promoted these actions for their visitors, as the framing of such interactivity impacted the connections drawn between the visitor and the Global South 'Other'.

Overall Foucault's (1991; 1972; 1970) perspective of discourse and truth therefore contributed to a postcolonial perspective that unpacked and challenged the knowledge produced and the truth claims made by the case study NGO's through their websites. Although Foucault's framework for discourse was not focused on visual imagery or interactive 'clickable' buttons; the theoretical principles and considerations outlined above contributed a means of linking the websites' representations to broader society. Such an approach considered how people, actions and practices can be 'disciplined' into specific ways of knowing, seeing and doing through the websites. Foucault's (1970; 1972) concepts therefore provides a means through which the production of knowledge was to be examined in the websites through a postcolonial lens. While, a semiotic approach of analysis may have provided a more established framework for analysing the websites' elements (see Adami, 2015; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006), this study's overall focus was ultimately best served by a Foucauldian approach. This allowed considerations of how knowledge was produced, and the priorities/relations that were prioritised through the production and performance of knowledge. Foucault (1991; 1972; 1970) draws on the practices and meanings within representations, as opposed to a focus exclusively on aesthetical and/or grammatical qualities. A postcolonial perspective of the NGOs and their websites in this thesis, therefore looked to challenge the power imbued through the dominant discourses that shape the Global South, aid and development, and Global North public responses.

4.5 Concluding The Chapter

A postcolonial critique in this thesis therefore aimed not only to critically unpack the performance of geographical imaginaries within the four case study websites, but also to examine the knowledge and priorities that such imaginaries underpin. Such a theoretical framework therefore informed understandings regarding the possibilities and challenges in the four case study websites for the production of 'counter-geographies of aid and development'. The dominant imaginaries at the heart of aid and development discourse in the Global North are ultimately geographical abstractions of distance and difference; they reflect a constructed

'reality' of distant places and people (Gregory, 2004; Said, 1979). In line with this perspective, a Foucauldian approach to discourse looked to unpack the production of knowledge that contributed to dominant imaginings and dominant ways of knowing the world. A key understanding between both a postcolonial perspective and Foucault's approach to discourses is that representations of the world are constructs; they also signify political and cultural ideologies that warrant examination. The postcolonial perspective outlined here required an analytical framework that would recognise the discursive capacity of each website. An analytical framework was required that examined the knowledge produced within a case study website, while interrogating the organisation's social (and political and cultural) settings. Moreover, the analytical framework also needed to respond to how a websites' discourses were prioritised through their design, to unpack how these choices are reflective of the particular power dynamics in each NGO website. Finally, the analytical framework need to ensure that the interactivity and multimodality of each website could be analysed for it's discursive capabilities.

5. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Drawing on a postcolonial critique of four case study NGO websites, this thesis required an analysis that examines how each website prioritised and marginalised knowledge for public consumption. More specifically, the analytical framework needed to incorporate how a website's design and characteristics contributed to the production of knowledge by the organisations. This chapter describes the analytical framework developed and operationalised within this analysis. First, the chapter revisits the research aims and objectives at the centre of the thesis, situating the analysis within key analytical concerns that emerged from the literature review and theoretical framework. Next, the chapter considers the role that websites play as a constructed archive of data for this project, outlining the archiving framework used to take the content of each website offline for analysis. The final three sections of this chapter illustrate the analytical framework itself, and how it was utilised in the analysis of each website to respond to the aims and objectives of this research. This includes discussion on the adaptions made to Fairclough's (1993) critical discourse analysis framework throughout the analysis process. Additionally, the use of content analysis as an invaluable supplementary research stage of the analysis is explicated. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the analytical framework are unpacked.

5.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This thesis focused on the discourses produced by four case study organisations through their websites, unpacking how each organisation construct and promote knowledge for their public audience. The central research question for this thesis aimed to:

Examine the opportunities and challenges posed by and to each case study NGO in the production of critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses.

Informed by the literature review and theoretical framework, the research objectives of this thesis include:

1. To examine how each case study website discursively construct the Global South 'Other', critically examining the key understandings promoted around issues of inequality, suffering and/or crisis;

2. To examine the key discourses on aid and development interventions that emerge from each website. Here, the research paid particular attention to the interventions prioritised by each organisation, considering how each website mediated narratives of NGO work;

3. To examine the connections promoted by each website in the presentation of distant suffering, focusing particularly on the role of these digital platforms in promoting responses to address distant suffering, and examining how public responsibility is mediated.

4. To establish a methodological framework that responds to the discursive and performative power within online and NGO communication, outlining a responding to the challenges of online interactivity and multimodality.

This thesis therefore unpacks how the production of alternative discourse mediated by NGOs, continues to be constrained through the dominance of uncritical and emotive public imaginaries. As noted in the previous two chapters theoretical gaps within the literature on NGO communication are evident, particularly regarding the range of priorities under which different types of NGOs approach their public audiences. As a result, this research insists that an alternative discourse not only required an examination of the representations that are prioritised by the case studies, but it also needed an examination of the principles (and power relations) that such mediations are working to sustain for NGOs. The four case study organisations provided an insight into a broad range of different motivations and priorities that inform contemporary NGOs' production of discourse for their publics. In examining the discourses promoted by the case studies, and the organisational choices/priorities that they reflect, this thesis was able to situate a call for alternative/counter discourse within an understanding of the potential challenges and possibilities that this poses for NGOs.

It should be noted that this project looked to focus exclusively on the knowledge produced by these case studies, and the public imaginaries that emerge across the range of their public engagement priorities. This research does not therefore include an audience-based perspective, whereby the consumption or interpretation of this knowledge was examined. Nor did the project examine the internal operational contexts of each of these organisations. While both perspectives certainly offer important elements of these organisations' public discourse, this

research sought to focus on the public imaginaries that emerge from the public discourse produced by these organisations. This research centred on how different organisational principles were reflected (or not) in the public imaginaries promoted by the case studies for the public. Subsequent examinations of the internal operational contexts of these public imaginaries, and their interpretations by various audiences undoubtedly warrant future research trajectories of their own. However, an analysis of the public imaginaries produced by these organisations provide an essential prerequisite to such studies.

First, the analytical framework required for this thesis needed an examination of the knowledge construction within each organisational website. In particular, analysis needed to unpack how the websites' imagery, written text and clickable buttons contributed to the imaginaries of the Global South that frame knowledge about poverty, aid and development, and public responsibility. Second, the analytical framework needed to consider how the websites promoted specific connections between the website 'visitor' and a distant Global South 'Other'. Representational tropes and aesthetics were of particular significance here for an analysis of imagery and written texts, however the analytical framework needed a means to consider how web design and interactive 'clickable'[6] buttons contributed to such mediations of public responsibility. In unpacking the priorities and motivations that inform an organisation's production of discourse, the analytical framework finally had to critically examine the socio-political and cultural settings that such knowledge is created within, and for. In summary, an analytical framework for this research required a means for unpacking the prioritisation (and marginalisation) of knowledge by each case study organisation, while simultaneously acknowledging the discursive capacities of the websites' multimodality, design and interactivity.

5.3 Constructing the Case Study Archives

As noted previously, NGO websites act as the hub for all organisational online communication strategies. Content ranges across a diverse set of public engagement priorities; including information provision, income generations, awareness-raising, development education, transparency and accountability concerns, and community engagement (Young, Tully and

6 For the purpose of this research, 'clickable button' refers to any hyperlinked shape, word, or picture that offers the website user the opportunity to access new information or take an action on the website.

Dalrymple, 2018; Fecteau, 2017; Yang and Taylor, 2015). The material provided through any NGO's website therefore provides an opportunity to analyse the organisation's production of knowledge and responses through different priorities. As such, an analysis of an organisation's website allowed considerations around the impact that a varied range of priorities and objectives have on a case study's production (and marginalisation) of knowledge. It is important to reiterate here however that a focus on 'the digital' for this research was explicate, centring on the production and representation of knowledge through each NGO website. The websites' written text, visual imagery and clickable buttons were all considered in terms of how they included and excluded knowledge about poverty, aid and development, and public responsibility. This project therefore does not focus an analysis on the devices, software and/or networks that enable a multiplicity of contexts in which these websites will be consumed in (see Adams, Craine and Dittmer, 2014). While it is acknowledged here, that these different contexts certainly have an impact on how knowledge is interpreted by each individual visitor, such considerations are subject to an audience-based analysis that falls outside the focus of this research. The objectives of this research do not include an examination from an audience perspective of how the website's content viewed and used by different users on different devices. Instead, it looked to examine and unpack the specific assemblages of knowledge and actions communicated by the NGO through their website, and the priorities that underpin this production.

The primary data for this investigation therefore were the webpages and the (multimedia) content of the four case study websites. Given the online 'live' nature of these websites, and the sheer volume of webpages incorporated within them, an archiving process was required in order to take the websites offline to avoid changes to, or loss of, content during the analysis. The creation of this 'offline' archive was also crucial for allowing the time and depth of analysis required for a critical discourse analysis framework.

The formation of the archiving process used for this PhD research emerged in response to the case study websites themselves; the interactive and non-linear nature of the websites highlighted two key challenges. Firstly, at the time of archiving there was a lack of reliable and suitable software to take the websites' content offline; this posed a challenge for ensuring a consistent means of archiving across four different case studies. Given the comparative element of this research, creating archives that maintained consistency and rigour for all four websites was a fundamental component for this analytical framework. Secondly, given that the analysis required an examination of how knowledge and actions are prioritised in the websites, it was

important that the website archives reflected the internal hierarchal structure of the websites. Analysis requires the capacity to retrospectively inspect any webpage of each website, asking key questions such as: where was a page positioned within the overall website? How many clicks away was a page from the home page? What were the pathways leading to a particular webpage? What are the actions facilitated for the visitor on the pages? The archiving process therefore required a means of recording the different actions prompted for visitors to each webpage, and the range of different pathways that are prioritised and marginalised throughout each website. To summarise, the archives for this analysis required:

- ✓ To be offline or 'frozen',
- ✓ A process that could be applied consistently to all four websites,
- ✓ To hold the capacity to record or reflect the internal hierarchal structure of each websites.

5.3.1 Archiving The Case Study Websites

Based on the above requirements, an archiving method was established informed by web design principles. Web design principles were central to how this thesis approached each websites' capacity to construct knowledge, including the prioritisation and marginalisation of content and actions. Three general principles from web design literature informed the archiving process:

> *Landing Pages:* Ash, Page and Ginty (2012) argue that landing pages of a website are the webpages that the individual organisations designate as an entry point at which online visitors arrive at a website. Landing pages mark one of the highest engagement points within any given website, as users from other online platforms including social media platforms and search engines will enter the website via these pages (see also Fayed, 2018).
>
> *Three Click Rule:* This is a principle of web design relating to the usability and accessibility of websites.[7] The three-click rule accounts for the trend in visitor behaviour that argues webpages three clicks from a landing page will have a

[7] While the specificity of 'three clicks' has been subject to much debate, it is used here on the basis of its central argument that visitor rates to webpages decrease the less accessible they are from a landing page i.e. the more clicks they require away from a landing page (Icasiano, 2015; Zeldman, 2001).

comparatively larger drop-off rate in visitors than those pages within one click, and thus reflect lesser prioritised knowledge. Moreover, Bortree's (2007) analysis of a website's content suggests that the three-click rule provided more-than-enough range for a website's content to be analysed.

Engagement Pathways: Interactive links or 'clickable buttons' within a webpage mark the beginning of an engagement pathway on websites, whereby the clickable button marks an exit point from the current page, while simultaneously providing an entry point to a subsequent webpage (Ash, Page and Ginty, 2012). The design and positioning of clickable buttons within a webpage reflect a prioritisation (or marginalisation) of specific engagement pathways (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). In this perspective, the most salient clickable button within a webpage will reflect the desired engagement pathway from that webpage (Ash, Page and Ginty, 2012).

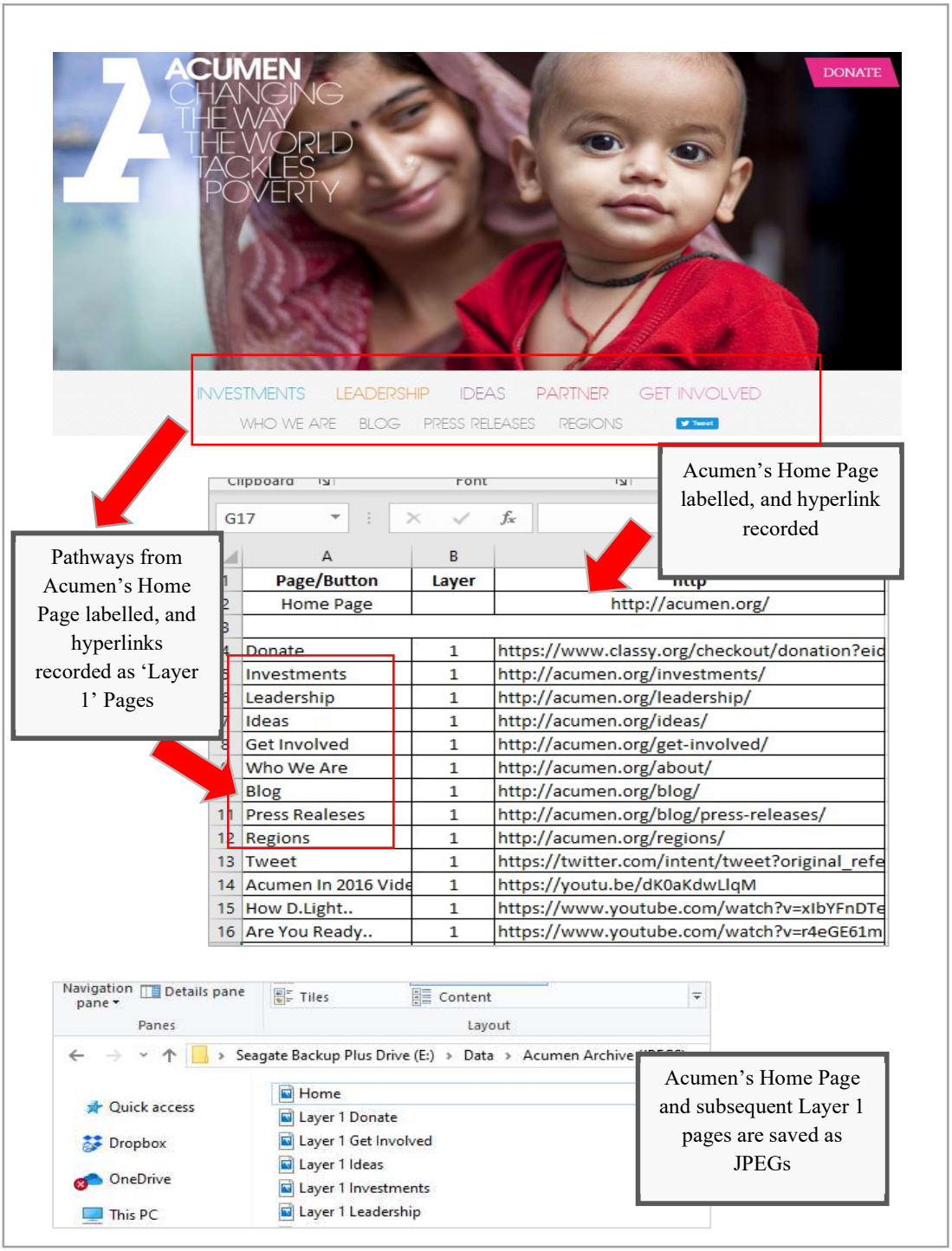
The archiving process operationalised within this thesis therefore draws from these three principles of web design, while also informed by the analytical requirements of this research. The archiving process can be broken down into the following steps (see Figure 5.1 below).

Step	Action	
1.	Initial observation of the website, identifying the website's Home Page	Starting at the Home Page, observe the website, noting any clear layout characteristics and/or the level of interactivity facilitated.
2.	Save Home Page	The website's Home Page is saved as a JPEG images and labelled 'Home'. On Microsoft Excel sheet, the page's label is recorded as is its hyperlink.
3.	Identify all outward pathways on the Home Page.	Identify all clickable buttons that offer the visitor a pathway away from the Home Page.

Figure 5.1 Summary of Data Collection Steps 1-3

First, in order to maintain the hierarchal structure of the websites, the Home Page was identified as the starting point for all four case studies. The Home Page was chosen as the start as it signals a landing page that is common to all websites (Fayed, 2018; Ash, Page and Ginty, 2012). As noted above, landing pages mark an entry point through which most visitors will likely enter the website. As a result, these pages that are designated by the organisation pose as a sort of 'shopfront' for the rest of the content within a website. In other words, it presents the visitor (and analyst) with an idea of the key information and responses on offer within the

website, while looking to further engage the visitor with its content. Thus, the knowledge and actions that an organisation promotes on their Home Page provides an important signifier of how they prioritise discourse and response. Second, a JPEG image of the website's entire Home Page was saved using the *Google Chrome* extension '*Full Page Screen Capture*'. This extension allowed a copy of the entire web page to be saved offline, as a result written text, imagery and clickable buttons were all maintained in their original design and position that they appear in their online form. Alongside this, the web page's label and hyperlink was recorded on an Excel sheet. This provided a means for referencing the website's webpages, but also emerged as a map of the entire website as the process progressed (see below for more discussion). Thirdly, all clickable buttons offered on the webpage were subsequently identified and recorded (along with their hyperlinks) on this Excel sheet. These not only marked the range of exit pathways that are offered on a webpage, but they also acted as the entry points to new information. Recording these pathways allowed a map of the entire website to organically emerge through this process of labelling and recording (see Figure 5.2 below).



	A	B	C
1	**Page/Button**	**Layer**	**http**
2	Home Page		http://acumen.org/
3			
4	Donate	1	https://www.classy.org/checkout/donation?eid
5	Investments	1	http://acumen.org/investments/
6	Leadership	1	http://acumen.org/leadership/
7	Ideas	1	http://acumen.org/ideas/
8	Get Involved	1	http://acumen.org/get-involved/
9	Who We Are	1	http://acumen.org/about/
10	Blog	1	http://acumen.org/blog/
11	Press Realeses	1	http://acumen.org/blog/press-releases/
12	Regions	1	http://acumen.org/regions/
13	Tweet	1	https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?original_refe
14	Acumen In 2016 Vide	1	https://youtu.be/dK0aKdwLlqM
15	How D.Light..	1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIbYFnDTe
16	Are You Ready..	1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4eGE61m

Figure 5. 2 Excerpt from Acumen's Home Page, and the subsequent labelling and recording of Layer 1 pages

Step	Action	
4.	Label and save the corresponding webpages emerging from the Home Page.	All the subsequent pages emerging from the website's Home Page were saved, with the corresponding Home Page buttons acting as labels for the resulting pages.
5.	Save and label all 'Layer One' webpages.	Taking each subsequent webpage within a click from the Home Page. Step 3 & 4 were repeated until Layer 1 of the website's archive is established.
6.	Save and label all 'Layer Two' webpages.	Taking each subsequent webpage within a click from the Home Page. Step 3 & 4 were repeated until Layer 2 of the website's archive is established.
7.	Save and label all 'Layer Three' webpages.	Taking each subsequent webpage within a click from the Home Page. Step 3 & 4 were repeated until Layer 3 of the website's archive is established.

Figure 5.3 Summary of Data Collection Steps 4-7

Following the archiving of the Home Page, next all the subsequent web pages that emerged from the websites' Home Page were labelled and a JPEG copy saved offline, while also being recorded on the Excel archive (see Figure 5.3 above). Each webpage was recorded and labelled in accordance with the Home Page buttons that served as their entry point. As the archiving process progressed beyond the Home Page, each subsequent webpage within one click from the Home Page was labelled, with the additional tag recording how man clicks it appears from the Home Page i.e. this was referred to as the webpage's 'Layer'. In the archives created for this thesis, webpages that were positioned directly two-clicks from the Home Page are considered as 'Layer 2' pages. The label 'Layer 3' reflected those pages that subsequently followed another (third) click.

Taking each subsequent 'Layer 1' webpage, steps 2-4 were repeated until the second layer (i.e. webpages within 2 clicks from the Home Page) of the website's archive was established. This step was subsequently repeated until the final layer of the website's archive was complete. As mentioned already, recording and labelling the webpages in this way effectively became a mapping exercise for each of the websites (on the Excel spreadsheet).The choice to archive the websites at four levels (Home, plus three clicks) was determined both by the three-click rule

(see above), but also on observation of the websites themselves. Initial observations of the case study websites demonstrated that webpages at 'Layer 3' (i.e. pages three clicks away from the Home Page) in some of the case studies contained the first instance of webpages including country profiles and programme/approach information. Given that these webpages were of particular relevance to the aims and objectives of this research, it was important to include layer three webpages in the archive of all four case studies. It was also noted in initial observations of the websites that pages beyond Layer 3, all (across the four websites) demonstrated a marked increase in page repetition. As a result of the labelling process, webpages could be identified in accordance of how many clicks it appeared from the Home Page, and the clickable button (and web page) that it emerged from in the previous layer. Moreover, this map of a website provided the analytical approach with the means to establish how content and actions were prioritised and/or marginalisation despite the webpages being offline. Figure 5.4 below provides an example of how a sampled webpage from the archive of Trócaire's website can be mapped in accordance to its position within the overall website. Here, the sampled webpage ('Educator Support') can be said to occur three-clicks from the Home Page and emerged from the Layer 2 button/page entitled 'Education'.

The method of archiving ensured the widest range possible of webpages emerged for analysis, the webpages that made up the four archives can be broadly summarised as:

1. *Home Pages*: these produced knowledge about the organisations' main activities and engagement priorities, while also providing a navigation base for the entire website
2. *Donation pages* that facilitated the transaction of money between user and the organisation. Knowledge regarding the rationale for intervention and response was most salient within these pages.
3. *Participation pages* that provided knowledge to the visitors about community engagement and learning other than donation. These included pages concerning fundraising, development education material, volunteering for example (e.g. 'Get Involved', 'Start A Campaign', 'Take Action').
4. *General Information-giving* pages that provided information about the organisation itself, (including 'About Us' and 'Our Vision') and about the operations of organisations such as country profiles and programmatic themes (e.g. 'What We Do', 'Where We Work').

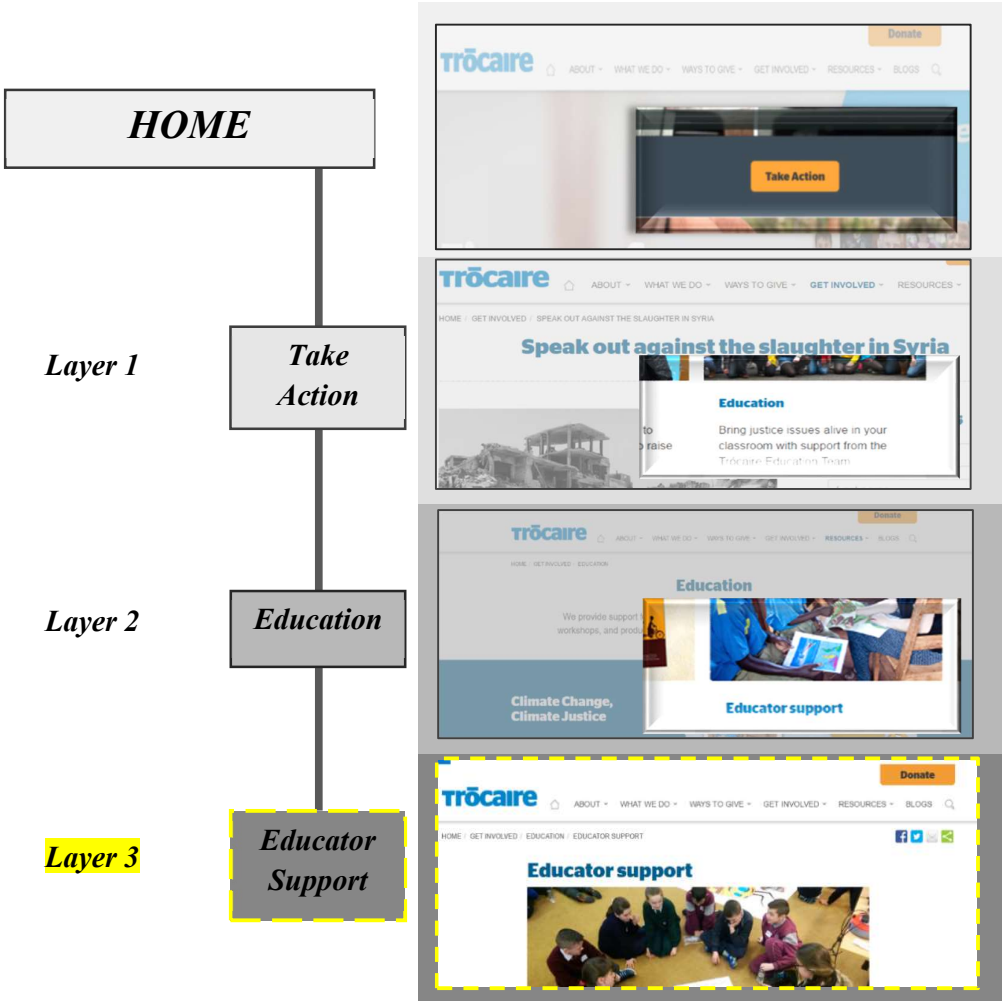


Figure 5.4 Mapping of the sampled webpage 'Educator Support' via the archive of Trócaire's website

The entire archiving process took an average of four to six weeks per website, however this time also served as a period of data immersion that proved invaluable throughout the remainder of the research. It should also be noted here that this process of archiving was suitable for this research on the basis that the aims and objectives did not require a user-based perspective. As this thesis does not focus on the impact that user engagement has on discourse production, the archives did not need to maintain the usability or interactivity of the websites. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the archiving process of each website came to act as a significant preliminary analysis method. Archiving the websites manually proved an opportunity for data immersion that contributed important analytical insights (including initial coding terms for example). While archiving also proved fundamental in highlighting methodological challenges posed by each of the websites and the creation of suitable solutions.

5.3.2 SAMPLING THE DATA

A sampling of webpages was therefore required to ensure a more practicable and manageable archive for analysis across the four case study websites. Thus, from each of the four archives a sample of forty-six pages per case study website was chosen for inclusion in the analysis (184 webpages in total across the four archives). A sample of ***each*** case study website therefore included the Home Page; fifteen webpages sampled from Layer 1; fifteen webpages sampled from Layer 2; and fifteen webpages sampled from Layer 3 (i.e. forty-six webpages per website).

The sample of forty-six webpages per each case-study website was determined by both practical and methodological factors. First, in order to ensure content was analysed from throughout the websites, the pages were sampled from each layer so as to avoid an over-representation of webpages from specific layers. Moreover, sampling from each of these layers had to be even across the websites to maintain methodological rigour. A proportional sampling of webpages was not possible given that the data relating to websites' visiting numbers was not available, and predictions on the usability of websites cannot be made without such data. Second, while critical discourse analysis (CDA) by its nature requires repetitive examination (Askehave, 2007), a trial analysis on one website found the multimodality of the webpages significantly prolonged the time required for the completion of an analysis of a webpage. As a direct result of this trial analysis, forty-six webpages from each website was considered the maximum capacity for an analysis of all the websites; the depth of analysis involved and level of detail emerging from the findings ensured that forty-six webpages provided substantial empirical data for the objectives of this research. The decision to sample forty-six webpages was only possible given the manual archiving process (see above). The manual creation of the archives also facilitated a process whereby any findings emerging from the sample webpages could be considered alongside the websites to determine how representative they were of the entire website. Given that the websites contained a huge repetition of webpages and were found to maintain a discursive coherence throughout their sites, the sampling of forty-six webpages per case study was found to produce a suitable representative sample for each case study. Finally, while previous studies of online material (see Gee, 2005 and Creswell, 2003) used purposeful sampling for their examination of online material, random sampling was determined most suitable for this research. Given that aim of the research was not focused on a specific subject or theme, random sampling allowed a representative range of content and contexts to emerge from the website itself. In other words, random sampling allowed a focus on what

themes and issues were produced by the NGOs and their websites, as opposed to how the websites produced knowledge around a pre-determined subject.

A simple random sampling method was utilised in each website whereby all pages within each layer were assigned a number (the number of their cell on their individual Excel spreadsheets was used). Fifteen random numbers were generated using a random number generator in Microsoft Excel, and the pages corresponding to these numbers were identified for analysis. This method was repeated for all three layers across the four case study websites (see Appendix B for summary of the sampled archives). Given that this research was not focused on user experience of the websites this sampling was suitable; it allowed the discursive practices within the websites to emerge. The webpages that emerged from this random sampling included a wide range of aesthetics, content and modes of representations and provided the basis for fruitful discussion.

5.4 Analytical Framework I: Critical Discourse Analysis

Informed by a postcolonial perspective, critical discourse analysis (CDA hereafter) examines the interplay between discourse and the social structures that it both works to influence and those it becomes influenced by. As such, Foucault's (1972) ideas regarding 'discursive formations' and the power/knowledge couplet are fundamental to a conceptualisation of CDA. For Fairclough (1993; see also Fairclough, 1992), the production and operationalising of discourses through social structures are underpinned by specific power dynamics and relationships. These in turn also have a significant role in shaping social actors, relations and structures. A core tenant of CDA therefore is to expose and unpack these power relations that underpin discourse, so as to challenge the inequality or marginalisation that they perpetuate within the societies that they operate through (Fairclough 1992; Wodak and Meyer, 2001). As a result, CDA was well suited to a postcolonial analysis of NGO knowledge production; it facilitated the examination of dominant understandings, while considering the priorities, identities and relations that are sustained (and those that are marginalised).

Under its broadest terms CDA targets ideology, power and social wrongs as key elements for analytical focus; CDA in particular looks to examine how imbalances within these either/all of three elements can contribute to a privileging of social groups over others (Woodak and Meyer, 2001; Fairclough, 2001; 1995; 1992; 1989). Through this perspective, the construction of knowledge is often based upon taken-for-granted presuppositions dominantly held by certain social groups that in the end reproduces the 'truth' it speaks of (while marginalising other ways

of knowing). Such a perspective of CDA is ultimately rooted in Habermas's (1977) notion that language is a key determinant through which dominance is enforced within society. Through a focus on unpacking this dominance and truth (formation of discourse and regimes of truth), the political and cultural underpinnings of discourse are exposed by CDA (Wodak, 2001). As a result, Wodak (2001) argues that CDA's focused interrogation on power relations within discourse leads to an exposition of the network of injustices, control and power that is entwined within language, and therefore upholds very clear ideological, political and cultural values. Within this thesis such considerations around this relationship, between language and society, were extended to the work of visual imagery and clickable buttons, as well as written text. Moreover, such an analytical perspective was particularly well suited to the research objectives; how the case study NGOs constructed knowledge about global poverty, interventionary practices and the public's responsibility to respond is embedded with socio-cultural and political priorities. Unpacking these priorities was key to any considerations around what principles and priorities are maintained, and by extension informs an understanding around what challenges are posed to NGOs by an insistence on a counter-discourse.

Based on this interpretation of discourse, CDA does not focus on the construction of discourse alone however; the (non-textual) social structures and power relations that operate through a discourse are considered equally important. In line with the postcolonial critique at the heart of this thesis, CDA frameworks centre on the proposition that texts should be examined as a social practice; a practice that is both constitutive of and constituted by social structures, relations and actors (Fairclough, 2005; Wodak, 2001). As Titscher et al. (2006, p.146) note regarding CDA, "*it is not interested in language per se, but in the language feature of social and cultural processes and structures*". Reflecting this, both Wodak (2001) and Fairclough (2005) argued that CDA should consider the dialectical-relational interplay that occurs within texts; people, place, things and discourses are constructed by social relations, while simultaneously shaping identities, relationships and knowledge. As a result, CDA considers the organisation of discourse through the text (i.e. what knowledge is promoted through the texts?), and how it operates through society (i.e. how social identities and structures are constructed and supported through the discourse?). The CDA approach applied to this research therefore considered the discursive practices that constitute public understandings through the organisation's website, while also unpacking the power and social relations that constituted the production of such discourse.

5.5 Fairclough's Three Dimensional CDA Framework

To examine the case study websites, and their prioritisation of knowledges and responses for the public, Fairclough's (1993) three-dimensional model for CDA was utilised in this research. This was chosen as the three-dimensional model allows for an analysis of discourse production that both examines what is being described and how it looks to shape and inform the audience's interpretation. Fairclough's (1993) three-dimensional model calls for analysis of texts as a 'discursive event'; where the text is considered it its linguistic and visual characteristics, but also as part of wider discursive practices (recognising that the text is something produced and something that will be consumed) and social practices (the text will function within social and institutional structures). As a result, the three-dimensional approach to CDA examines a discursive event at three interrelated levels. The first level of analysis suggests an (textual analysis) examination of the linguistics and visual characteristics of the text. This includes an analysis of the grammatical, structural and lexical features of the text. The second level on analysis (discourse analysis) examines the discursive practices within the text. These are analysed through an examination of the production and interpretation of the text. This level of analysis is characterised by an examination of the intertextuality and interdiscursivity within and surrounding the text. Here, analysis focuses on what power relations and social identities are maintained by the production of such discourse, while also unpacking what presumptions the text makes about who and how the discourse will be interpreted by. This includes considerations around the coherence within the text's discourses (i.e. are they contradictory or are certain priorities and ideologies sustained throughout). Finally, the third level of analysis (social analysis) looks to examine the institutional and societal contexts in which the discursive event is part of (Fairclough, 1993). This ultimately examines how or if discourses challenge dominant social identities and relations or perpetuate them.

Applied to the case study websites, a three-dimensional model of CDA in this thesis therefore examined how each organisation constructed knowledge of Global South poverty, aid and development, in relation to how it informed Global North public responsibility. Subsequently, the analysis across all four case study websites facilitated the examination of how the production of knowledge varied across the different organisations; considering how different organisational structures, contexts and priorities operated through the discourses of each website. In doing so, Fairclough's (1993) three-dimensional CDA responded to analytical requirements pertinent to the three research objectives of this thesis regarding the production of knowledge. Analysing the websites on three different levels facilitated critical inquiry not

only of the linguistic, visual and interactive features of the websites and their effect on knowledge production and response; but consideration was paid to the contextual factors that shape each organisation's production of discourse and influence they have on scripting public understandings. This model of CDA therefore also facilitated the overall aim of the research; *to examine the possibilities and challenges for the case studies' production of critically engaged and contextually nuanced discourses for their public audiences*. Findings from the CDA allowed the research to draw out key organisational characteristics, priorities and strategies that were particularly facilitating and/or obstructive to a production of counter-geographical knowledge. Thus, considerations around the challenges and possibilities for these organisations to produce alternative discourse could be drawn from the three-dimensional analysis of the websites. The CDA framework operationalised in this thesis can be broken down as follows:

5.5.1 Textual Analysis I: Preparing The Data

Within this thesis, textual analysis of the websites focused on the content within each webpage, both in terms of the individual components (i.e. an image, a block of written text, a clickable button), but also the page as a coherent representational whole (i.e. how the individual components were positioned and designed within a page to incur meaning within a page). In order to examine the discursive capacities of such multimodality, each page was broken down into message units prior to carrying out an analysis of textual features of the webpages. This process was informed by Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar principles that describe how individual components are designed and positioned together to form a cohesive unit around a specific topic (i.e. message units).

The webpages were deconstructed into message units using principles of web design and visual grammar; Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) describe principles that were central to this thesis's understanding of web design and meaning making. They include:

> *Coherence:* Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar theory notes that component's (i.e. an image, written text, clickable button) grouped together can form a coherent unit of knowledge. Components within a page will often be grouped together either by virtue of their proximity to one another, their inclusion within a border, or indeed through components sharing the same colour palette (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Coherence within the NGO websites therefore served as a means of examining

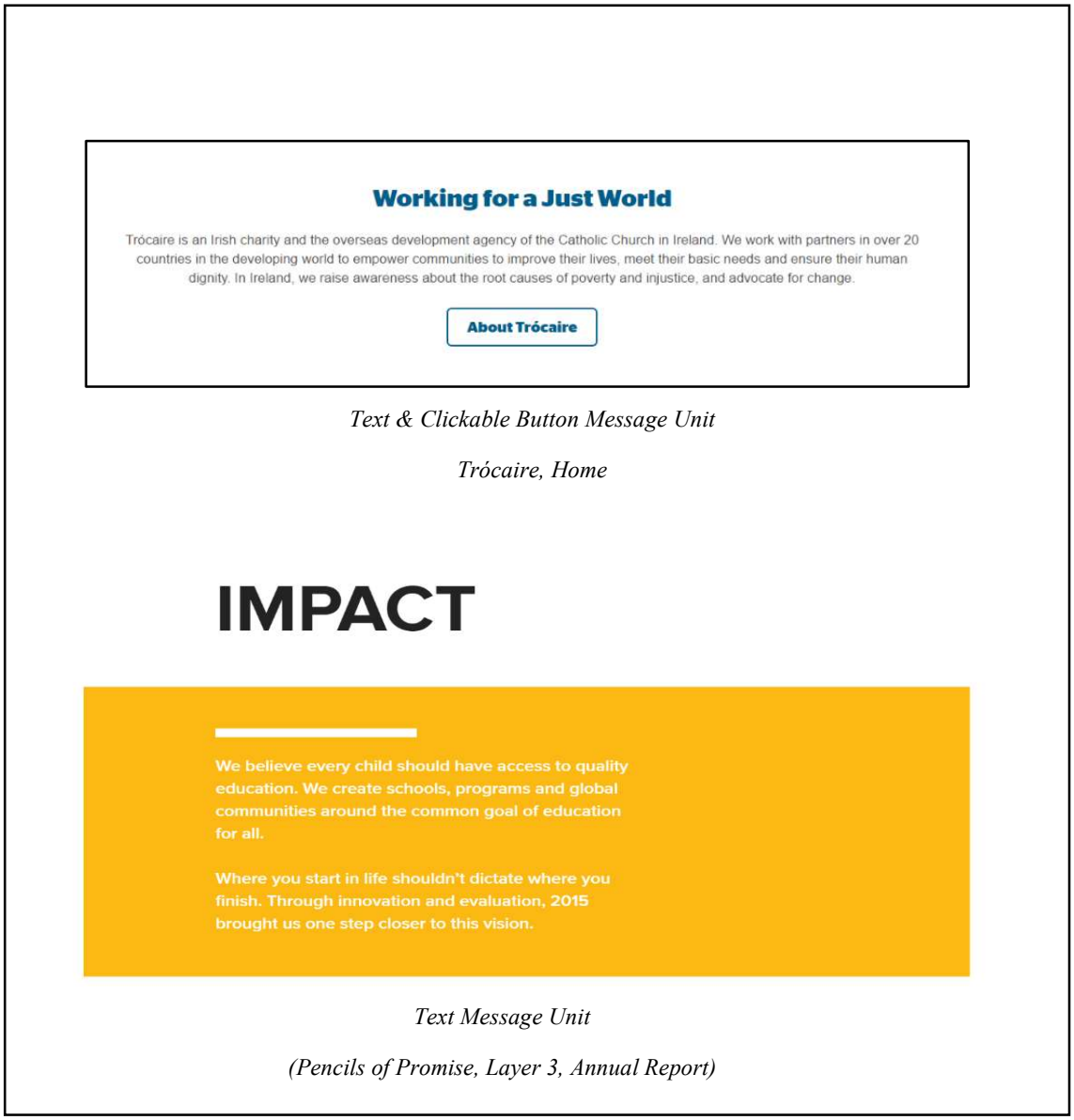
how a webpage's components were grouped into an assemblage of knowledge, designed to construct understandings for visitors.

Weight: Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) also suggest that a component's weight on a webpage reflects the likelihood of it being recognised by the website's visitor and thus engaged. Weight for Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) is determined by a component's design, such as its size on the webpage in relation to other components, its colour contrast, and/or the presence/or absence of moving imagery. Moreover, visual ques such as arrows or flashing shapes can contribute to a component's weight. In terms of this analysis and examining the prioritisation/marginalisation of knowledge; the greater a component's weight reflected a higher probability of it being engaged. As a result, a component's weight acted as another marker of a prioritisation of its content over others available on the same page.

Positioning: Web pages can be broken down into general zones of higher and lower prioritisation. These zones reflect countless user-based studies (see Kim et al., 2015; Roth et al. 2013, for example) that determine how website visitors demonstrate a higher engagement with specific zones on a webpage, while demonstrating less engagement with other zones. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note that reading pathways on webpages broadly follow a left-to-right pattern, progressing down towards the bottom of the page. Eye-tracking research based on web user-behaviour has been shown to support this also (Kim et al., 2015; Roth et al., 2013). As a result, the general web design principle for content positioning follows the idea that the top-left corner of a web pages has the highest probability of engagement than content positioned at the bottom-right of a page, decreasing further as the page requires scroll/click to view further down the page. Thus, these zones within a webpage reflect the priority given to content. In the context of this research and considering the composition of message units, the positioning of messages in accordance with these zones was considered to reflect a prioritisation of message units over others on the same webpage.

In summary, each sampled webpage was deconstructed into its individual textual components, and through an application of the principles (outlined above) these components were organised in terms of their relationship with other components on a page. As a result of these considerations a webpage was subsequently broken down into any discernible message units that existed (see Figure 5.5 for examples). These message units consisted of a variation of

components and content, the ordering of which was a fundamental element of a webpage's construction of knowledge. Breaking the webpages down into these message units allowed each webpage to be examined for the knowledge they produce about a topic or an issue. Also, analysing the webpage through these message units facilitated an analysis that recognised how webpages will often consist of a number of messages. An examination of how these units combined together (or not) on a webpage impacted the meaning incurred within pages.



Text & Clickable Button Message Unit

Trócaire, Home

Text Message Unit

(Pencils of Promise, Layer 3, Annual Report)

Figure 5. 5 Examples of message units analysed in the case study websites.

Text & Imagery Message Unit

(Acumen, Layer 2, Housing)

Figure 5. 5 contd. Examples of message units analysed in the case study websites.

5.5.2 Textual Analysis II: Analysing The Webpages

The first level of CDA analysis examined the design, layout and content of each message unit within the webpages; this identified the knowledge produced about poverty, aid and development and public responsibility (i.e. the research objectives). In addition, this analysis considered how the webpages' message units, particularly the clickable buttons within these units, prompted and facilitated specific responses from visitors. This first level of analysis also examined the links between message units within a webpage, it looked to determine how (or if) they work together to produce discourse(s) overall within a webpage. This draws on Foucault's (1972) idea of discursive formations discussed previously; the selective organisation of language, or in this case a webpage's components, to make statements about a topic, and in so doing assigns meanings to topics, people or places.

The overall aim of a textual analysis according to Fairclough (1993) should be to describe the features within the text, examining the selection of grammatical and visual characteristics. In a textual analysis of the webpages, the representation of knowledge through message units was examined in terms of any linguistic and visual features of message units, while also considering the interactivity prompted by or through any clickable buttons. This provided an understanding of how different representational modes were used within the webpages to promote specific knowledge and responses for visitors. Rubrics from Janks (2005), Kress and Van Leeuwen

(2006), and Adami (2015) were utilised in this endeavour. The rubrics of Janks (2005), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Adami (2015) all draw from Halliday's (1985) theory of '*functional grammar'*. Functional grammar is premised on the foundational principles that grammatical and compositional choices within a text are a specifically selected expression of knowledge, thus prioritising one particular meaning at the expense of other possibilities (Halliday, 1985).

As noted in Figures 5.6 and 5.7 below for example, the rubrics of Janks (2005) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) focus analysis on the detail within the linguistics and visual features of the webpages. The features forwarded for analysis through these rubrics (i.e. Mood, Modality, Setting, Means etc…) are examined from the Halliday's (1985) perspective of grammar; choices regarding the inclusion and exclusion of knowledge will incur specific meaning and thereby promote certain identities and social relations at the expense of others (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006; Janks, 2005). The textual features and accompanying explanations within these rubrics were particularly useful in the context of this research. The rubrics facilitated an analysis of the agency and relations that were promoted for website visitors around distant 'Others', practitioners and/or the visitor themselves. Linguistic features such as 'transitivity', 'voice', 'nominalisation' for example contributes to how agency of the Global South 'Other' is mediated to the website visitor. The choice of verbs, the activation of voice (or not) and the process by which participants were rendered nominal also contributes to a represented subject being rendered passive or active in a text. Similarly, visual representations could be analysed for 'offer' and 'demand' features that contribute to how identities and relations are promoted (and marginalised) within imagery. An actor within imagery can be offered to the website's visitors as a representation of specific information for example; statements made about the depicted distant people and places offered the viewer a specific type of connection to the represented 'Other'. While, imagery can also demand something from viewers through the depicted actor's gestures or gaze; melodramatic visual tropes for example obligated a website visitor to respond or engage with the Global South 'Other' in specific ways (Wells, 2013). Both these visual features had significant consequences for the type of relations promoted between the website's visitor and the distant Global South 'Other'.

Linguistic Feature	Explanation
Lexicalisation	The selective/choice of wording
Metaphor	Used for yoking ideas together and for discursive construction of new ideas
Euphemism	Hides negative actions or implications
Transitivity	Processes in verbs: are the verbs of: doing/being/having/thinking/feeling/perceiving/saying
Voice	Active and passive construct participants as doers or as done-to's Passive voice allows for the deletion of the agent
Nominalisation	A process is turned into a single a thing or an event without participants or tense or modality
Mood	Is the clause a statement, question, offer or command?
Modality	Logical possibility/probability
Degrees of Uncertainty	Social authority
Pronouns	Inclusive we / exclusive we/you Us and them: othering pronouns He/She
Sequencing of information	Sequence sets up cause and effect
Logical connectors- conjunctions set up the logic of the arguments	Conjunctions: Additive: and, in addition to Causal: because, so, therefore Adversative: although, yet Temporal: when, while, after, before

Figure 5.6 Janks (2005) rubric for linguistic analysis

Visual Feature	Explanation
Actor	An active participant: a participant from which the vector of the image emits from or is fused within the vector
Goal	The passive participant: the participant at which the vector is directed (this can be determined by voice and/or action also). The person to whom the action is done to or aimed at..
Reactor	The active participant in a reaction process: the participant whose look creates the eye line
Phenomena	Formed by another participant, the participant at whom or which the reactor is looking, or a whole visual proposition.
Transactional reaction	An eye line vector connects two participants, a reactor and a phenomenon Reactor is reacting to something There can be many transactional reactions in one image (note the position/prominence of each TR)
Non-transactional reaction	An eye line vector emanates from a participant, the reactor, but does not point to another participant
Setting	Often will be determined by camera focus, detail, colour, saturation ect
Means	The processes used for creating the image (photograph, video, graphic, logo)
Symbolic Attributes	Attributes give meaning and identity to participants (position, size, lightening, detail, focus)
Point of view	Frontal angle and oblique angle can determine self and the 'other'
Offer	Represented participants are offered to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally...

	Statements, goods and services can be offered
Demand	Participants gaze (and gesture) demands something of the viewer, demands the viewer to enter some kind of imaginary relation with him or her Information and action can be demanded

Figure 5.7 Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) rubric for visual analysis

In addition to this, clickable buttons were often components of the messages presented to the website visitor; these played a central role in how the websites mediated knowledge about Global North responsibility, especially as they facilitated and prioritised responses. In this endeavour, Adami's (2015) approach to examining the meaning-making capacity of a web interactivity was particularly suitable to incorporate into this project's analytical framework. In this approach, Adami (2015) suggests that a clickable button's meaning-making capacity occurs on two planes; the syntagmatic plane and the paradigmatic plane (see figure 5.8 below). On the syntagmatic plane a clickable button creates meaning in terms of how its appearance, but also how it operates alongside other elements of the text (i.e. within the message units, and the webpage overall). On the paradigmatic plane, clickable buttons incur meaning on the basis that they provide information or facilitate actions, they also position both the user and the producer (additionally in this research these buttons create a position for the Global South 'Other'). Adami's (2015) own utilisation of this approach was focused on considerations around how the website's interactivity can move a user around a website, and therefore creates a position/point of view for the visitor. However, the syntagmatic and paradigmatic approaches to clickable buttons also provided the means for considering how they contribute to the organisation and construction of knowledge.

Plane	Ideational Function	Interpersonal Function	Textual Function	Interactive Value
Syntagmatic (on the web page)	What it is - signifier/signified	What it says about - authors - users Is the sign addressing anyone directly or indirectly? What is the sign offering or demanding? Are there any expectations set?	How/Where in the page - salience - info structure How is the sign positioned within the page and in relation to other elements?	Aesthetic (the aesthetics of interactivity)
Paradigmatic (option enabled)	Which action activates the button Which effect does it produce? Where does the new text appear?	Directionality/power: Who towards whom: author/users/others Who is at play? What direction/to whom is the button sending the text towards?	Before-after / Given-New Meaning of the text between where the text appears (Given) and what the text changes into (New)	Structural (the structure of interactivity)

Figure 5. 8 Adami (2015) Rubric For Analysis Of Clickable Buttons

The syntagmatic and paradigmatic planes promote specific actions and knowledge, contributing to a prioritisation and marginalisation of discourse central to this thesis. On the syntagmatic plane, Adami (2015) suggests the ideational meaning of clickable buttons relates to what the clickable buttons perform on the webpages, while the paradigmatic plane is concerned with the actions and effects that it facilitates. In the context of this research's objectives, this allowed an examination of how the clickable button contributed to the production and organisation of knowledge within a message, while also considering how the actions facilitated by the buttons promoted understandings of response and responsibility (i.e.

how do the buttons mediate connections between the website visitor and the Global South 'Other'). Adami's (2015) conceptualisation of the website's interactivity provided a rubric through which clickable buttons could be examined at a textual level in this thesis. Examining the clickable buttons at a syntagmatic and paradigmatic level therefore provided a means for analysing the role that clickable buttons played in mediating and facilitating public engagement with issues of Global South poverty and suffering. Incorporating Adami's (2015) approach to extend the textual analysis to include clickable buttons and their role in the organisation of discourse was important for this research, in particular the third research objective of this thesis: *To examine the connections promoted by each website in the presentation of distant suffering, focusing particularly on the role of these digital platforms in promoting responses to address distant suffering, and examining how public responsibility is mediated.*

Two further points regarding the suitability of these rubrics to this research are important to highlight here. First, the rubrics provided methodological consistency within an analytical process that could often be iterative and time-consuming, particularly given the multimodality of webpages and the volume of content. The use of rubrics to frame the textual analysis provided the overall analytical framework with a methodological rigour that not only ensured a consistent analysis across all four websites, but also guaranteed a consistent analysis despite the representational variations that occur within and between the webpages. Second, all three rubrics used were chosen based on their common theoretical underpinning of Halliday's (1985) 'functional grammar'. This provide a theoretical consistency to the textual analysis, across both message units, web pages and the websites themselves.

Drawing together these rubrics, this first level of analysis examined the content of the webpages in order to understand how each website prioritised specific knowledge about Global South poverty, aid and development interventions and Global North's public responsibility (i.e. knowledge pertaining to three of the research objectives). Imagery, language and clickable buttons were all examined in terms of how the Global South 'Other' was represented; how knowledge about poverty, aid and development and public response were constructed; and how the webpages situated the visitor within these constructions. In order to ensure a consistent focus amongst a range of different compositional choices, a coding system was created through which language, imagery and clickable buttons could all be analysed under. Informed by the research objectives and Chouliaraki's (2012; 2010; 2006) work of mediating distant suffering, the rubrics were underpinned by considerations regarding how the suffering 'Other' and the

viewer/user is positioned in relation to one another, how a spectatorship role may be created, and how melodramatic registers may be utilised to 'close distance' between 'Other' and visitor. This work was chosen not only because of its relevancy to the aims and objectives of this thesis (i.e. the mediation of distant Global South impacts how knowledge about poverty and interventions are constructed), but Chouliaraki's (2012; 2010; 2006) work is underpinned by a functional grammar framework similar to the rubrics.

As a result, Chouliaraki's (2012; 2010; 2006) concerns regarding the mediation of suffering 'Other' inherently shared a similar analytical focus to the rubrics outlined above. In the textual analysis of the webpages, all three rubrics focused on the composition of the texts unpacking how the prioritised knowledge/actions reflect the producers' expectations or presumptions about their target audience (Fairclough, 1993). Along a similar line of inquiry, Chouliaraki (2010) suggests that different communicative strategies within aid and development have emerged driven by sectoral and public priorities. As a result, it was useful to consider here how the textual compositions of messages reflected such strategies and priorities (or not). This included considerations around how (or if) the representational tropes reflected of post-humanitarian communication or the more established strategies of positive and/or suffering narratives. Moreover, Chouliaraki (2006) considers the representation of agency as a core element to understanding the mediation of distant suffering; who is afforded agency within communications of distant suffering and who is not. This reflects the interpersonal and ideational functions of grammar embedded within all three rubrics; it facilitated an examination of how texts forge connections between the subjects of the text, the viewer (or website visitor), and the producer. Coding here included melodramatic tropes, photo-journalistic modes of representation, and post-humanitarian aesthetics. Each communicative strategy has its own series of tropes and narrative arcs that informed a coding system for this level of analysis, the choice of these throughout the webpages provided an important insight into the organisational priorities that underpin their production of knowledge about the Global South, and how they mediate the agency of all relevant actors. Overall, applying Chouliaraki's (2012; 2010; 2006) considerations of the rubrics ensured that the textual analysis of the webpages was pertinent to a mediation of distant suffering. Such considerations included:

- How is the Global South 'Other' depicted?
- How are Global South landscapes presented?
- How is knowledge of suffering, causality, or issues of poverty depicted?

- Who is included/excluded in representations of both Global South and Global North?
- Who is depicted as speaking directly, who is spoken for, or who is spoken to within texts?
- Who is afforded direct action, who is action taken upon, who is rendered passive?

5.5.3 Discursive Analysis

The second dimension of analysis within a three-dimensional CDA for Fairclough (1993) aims to examine how the knowledge produced within a text operates within society; how the text looks to construct social actors, events and relations. As Fairclough (2001) notes, this level of analysis considers the knowledge produced within a text, the social actors who are featured (or not), and the relationships that the text looks to promote within surrounding social structures. In short, the production, distribution and interpretation of the text is considered in terms of how they support specific societal structures and/or relations. In this research, the discursive analysis considered the range of discourse promoted throughout each website regarding poverty, interventions and public responsibility. The analysis also examined what priorities and motivations were maintained within the production of such discourses, while also considering what presumptions these promoted discourses made about the websites' visitors (e.g. who was the expected audience?). Finally, this level of analysis unpacked how discourse looked to shape and influence visitors' interpretation of the knowledge/actions that was promoted.

For Fairclough (1992) a discursive level of analysis should focus particularly on the interdiscursivity and intertextuality of the text. Interdiscursivity, for Fairclough (1992) refers to the way that a discourse may interact with other discourses and/or genres, both within the text and in society more broadly. When a discourse operates alongside another discourse, depending on how they articulate their knowledge in relation to one another, Fairclough (1992) suggests that either a new discourse can emerge, or a dominant discourse will be reinforced. On interdiscursivity, Fairclough (2010) argues that a text is ultimately made of different genres, discourses and styles drawn from elsewhere. In order to examine interdiscursivity, then it requires identifying how the text's genres, discourses and style work alongside other texts; do they challenge, or re-produce genres, discourses and style used in other relevant texts. In the case of the websites, interdiscursivity was found to be relevant within the websites on a range of different levels. First, a focus on interdiscursivity examined how each webpage contributed to or challenged the discourses promoted overall within the website. Here, analysis considered how (and in what contexts) the webpages reproduced and challenged the different genres,

discourses and styles used throughout a website. In doing so, the analysis determined how the discourses prioritised within a web page related to the orders of discourse that emerged throughout the website more broadly. Second, interdiscursivity also required an examination of each website overall. The websites were examined in terms of how they drew on discourses operating in social and political structures beyond the confines of the website, considering how they reflected or disrupted the dominant imaginaries utilised within the wider media and the aid and development sector more broadly. Finally, it was also on this basis of interdiscursivity that the four case study websites could be compared in relation to each other. Here, the analysis considered how common themes were discursively shaped across the four case studies while also identifying where themes unique to certain website emerged. This element of interdiscursivity was therefore a particularly important line of inquiry central to this thesis's overall aim.

In terms of intertextuality, Fairclough (1992) refers to the way that discourses can be situated within, or connected to, pre-existing texts. For example, a text can be considered as part of an 'intertextual chain'; these are a series of texts that incorporate discourses in a different way (i.e. through a different genre or style). Again, here different texts can re-produce a discourse, or indeed disrupt and re-work an established discourse. Within this research, the websites were part of an intertextual chain that connects other material produced by the NGOs themselves, for example material produced by other NGOs, policy documents and political speeches within the aid and development sector. How a case study website operates within these intertextual chains was important to consider, especially given this research's focus on challenging dominant aid and development discourse. An examination of the websites' intertextuality identified any other texts relevant to the webpages, this considered how the webpages' discourse acted as a contributor or challenger to the knowledge circulated within that chain. For example, historically new reports and political speeches have contributed to the soft stereotypical depictions of Global South poverty that dominate NGO material (see Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014), a coherent intertextual chain continues to emerge as a result. Similarly, an intertextual chain is evident where narratives of intervention promoted through development education material has been found to reflect the narratives that emerge through international policies documents. In the context of this research, the second level of analysis considered intertextuality in terms of how the webpages operated alongside dominant NGO representational trends, and international aid and development policy more broadly. In line with the research's consideration around counter-representation and alternative discourse, this

analysis in particular considered how or indeed if the content prioritised by the websites managed to re-work, transform or reinforce content within these external texts.

For considerations of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, a coding system expanded to a focus on how and what understandings were being promoted throughout the websites for the public. Specifically, this coding drew on Andreotti's (2006) work on soft/critical understandings, and Darling's (2009) ideas regarding relational responsibility. This focused the discursive analysis on how knowledge of poverty and intervention promoted specific understandings and responses for the public. The extent that the websites promoted discourse that disrupt dominant soft understandings of global poverty, replacing them with ideas reflecting relational responsibility was a key determinant of the potential for a more critically engaged audience. Overall, this focus on interdiscursivity and intertextuality was therefore an important element of how this analytical framework responded to the research's aims and objectives.

5.5.4 Social Analysis

Directly related to the discursive analysis, Fairclough (1992) argues that any creation, reproduction or challenging of external texts are determined by the surrounding socio-political framework within which the texts are operating through. As such, a discursive analysis is tightly bound to the third and final dimension of analysis; a social analysis. For Fairclough (1993) the final dimension of this CDA framework examines the text within its social context. Here, the social analysis dimension looks to unpack how the discourses of the text related to the broader social, political and cultural discourses that operate around the text (Fairclough, 1992). In this level of analysis, Fairclough (1993; 1992) suggests that the analysis focuses on what socio-political relations and structures are supported (or challenged) through the text. As a result, this level of analysis determines the effects that the text has as a social practice. For example, Fairclough (1992) notes how texts can have ideological and hegemonic underpinnings that reinforce dominant world orders, prioritising social identities and relations over others. Analysis of the texts at this level should consider any naturalisation or taken-for-granted knowledge promoted will demarcate a way of knowing that reflect the dominant relations underpinning the text. This level of analysis therefore examined how the discourses produced within the websites constitute and are constituted by the wider socio-political relations and identities. In this research, a social analysis specifically looked to identify the normative assumptions, social identities and relations prioritised throughout the websites' discourses on poverty, aid and development, and public responsibility. Here, the websites and their discourses were considered in terms of broader social practices, and their role in dominant

(unequal) relations operating within aid and development. As such, this dimension was also important for considerations around the potential for counter-geographies; the analysis situated the websites within broader political and economic structures that NGOs operated within and considered whether or not the websites' discourses challenged or perpetuated dominant social and geopolitical relations.

Coding for this level of analysis drew upon the Global North discourses promoted through the media more broadly, again drawing on Andreotti's (2006) soft understandings and critiques of NGO representation of Global South poverty such as Dogra (2014, see also Madianou, 2013 and Manzo, 2008). These codes focused analysis around the ideologies, priorities and power relations that are perpetuated within dominant discourses of aid and development. In considering the extent to which these are disrupted by the websites (or not as the case may be) for this level of analysis, was particularly important in considering the challenges posed to an NGO by an insistence on alternative (potentially disruptive) discourse (i.e. what support networks/relationships are being challenged, and what are the potential consequences for an NGO's legacy and legitimacy?). In contextualising the production of knowledge, this stage of analysis for Fairclough (1992) marks a focus on *explanation*, in comparison to the previous dimensions of analysis that are concerned with how meaning is drawn from the discourses produced (description), and how the discourse looks to shape the social contexts around them (interpretation).

5. 5.5 Strengths and Limitations of Three-Dimensional CDA

A CDA of the websites identified the understandings and assumptions about poverty, aid and development, and the public responsibility prioritised by each organisation as a result of such understandings. CDA also determined the relationships that these discourses had to broader aid and development discourse, while additionally highlighting some of key societal, sectoral and institutional influences that impacted the case study's production of discourse. In identifying these effects and influences the analysis not only highlighted the knowledge prioritised by the organisations through their websites, but crucially it provided insight into the challenging factors that obstruct any insistence on alternative/counter-geographical knowledge for these case study organisations.

Critiques of CDA however have generally centred on the lack of a standard set of methodological frameworks (Widdowson, 2004; Rodgers et al. 2005); CDA frameworks vary in terms of the methods used and the analytical focus (Wodak and Myer, 2001; Wodak, 1999).

As result, methodological rigour is often weakened through the lack of an agreed-upon systematic framework. This leaves CDA approaches open to critiques that suggest a lack of objectivity; it is argued that analysts may be influenced by their own research agenda when carrying out an analysis (see Widdowson 2004; 1998; Rodgers et al. 2005). It has also been suggested that this lack of objectivity can extend to how CDA analysts draw their findings; results can often reflect an identification of themes from a text as opposed to an analysis of its discursive constructs (Rodgers et al. 2005). This relates to Widdowson's (2004, p.157) damning critique of CDA approaches more broadly, whereby he suggested that the lack of critical self-reflexivity within CDA approaches leaves analyses open to a "selective and subjective" interpretation. Where CDA fails to critically consider how the framework is being used to analyse a text, critics claims that analysts are open to interpret evidence according to their own ideological leanings.

In response to criticisms, it has been argued by others (see Wodak, 2001; Bucholtz 2001; Gee and Green, 1998) that CDA provides a freedom to adapt and combine analytical frameworks. This research has certainly benefited from CDA's capacity to adapt and respond to the nature of the websites; incorporating considerations of the websites' interactivity and multimodality for example relied on an iterative analytical process. However, in carrying out a CDA it is crucial to take heed of the merits within such critiques, particularly with regards the concerns around methodological rigor and objectivity. As such, the rubrics to analyse the webpages were utilised in order to provide a more systematic approach to the textual level of analysis, while also ensuring that all four case studies were analysed in the same manner. This was of particular importance given the comparative element of this research; rubrics ensured that all four case studies were analysed consistently. Moreover, the rubrics also provided a theoretically informed basis on which to incorporate the multimodality of the websites. Despite the variations of representational modes used in the webpages, the three rubrics that were based on functional grammar, all provided a means of drawing together considerations of different representations through a similar method of analysis. In addition to the use of rubrics, the methodology operationalised in this research also looked to address the concerns regarding CDA's capacity for subjective interpretation of findings. In response, the research used supplemental content analyses as a means for validating results that were drawn from the CDA. While this content analysis by no means provided absolute rigour, it did provide a quantitative insight to the CDA's findings.

5.6 Analytical Framework II: Content Analysis

A series of two content analyses were carried out following the CDA as part of the analytical framework of this thesis. A content analysis examined the visual representation of Global South people, while another considered they types actions promoted and facilitated by the websites' clickable buttons. It is important to reiterate here that content analyses were utilised within this thesis only to extend an understanding of specific qualitative trends that had emerged over the course of the CDA. Content analysis was chosen in this endeavour as it permits a focus on a specific element(s). Content analysis is traditionally considered relatively restricted (Krippendorf, 2013), in that it is largely a quantitative approach used to determine the meaning produced within texts. As a result, a content analysis can often dismiss nuance and distinctive themes in its focus on frequency and/or consistency. For this reason, content analysis was not considered sufficient as a core analytical tool for this research, however it did provide the thesis with valuable supplementary evidence that informed the discussions outlined in subsequent chapters.

5.6.1 Content Analysis of the Websites' Clickable Buttons

The CDA carried out as part of this thesis highlighted that each organisation prioritised for their website visitors particular responses (i.e. actions that promoted income generation and public support for the organisations), often to the detriment of other types of public engagement. In order to validate such considerations as a key finding of the research (and not a consequence of coding for example), a content analysis examining the complete range of responses prompted and facilitated through the websites' clickable buttons was carried out. The analysis contextualised the prioritisation of actions, by detailing each action prompted and facilitated by clickable buttons as a percentage of the total actions facilitated on the sampled webpages. As a result, the discursive prioritisation of responses within each website could be considered in terms of a quantitative considerations (see Chapter 8). In addition, the findings from the content analysis also highlighted points of note that extended discussions on CDA findings. For example, the content analysis highlighted an ambiguity that emerged between the actions facilitated by the websites and the discourse of public response that framed those same actions (see Chapter 8). As a result, the content analysis of clickable buttons proved particularly valuable to considerations around how the websites' construct knowledge of public responsibility (Research Objective 3).

This analysis of the clickable buttons aimed to determine what types of actions were invited through the clickable buttons within webpages, and what types of actions were subsequently

facilitated. However, a trial analysis noted that the number of clickable buttons within the sampled webpages skewed any attempt to quantify the actions promoted and/or facilitated within the webpages. For example, the number of buttons that navigated visitors throughout a website far outnumbered the number of buttons that directly prompted a response to suffering/crises. As a result, the content analysis of clickable buttons demarcated between three general groups of buttons found across all four websites;

> *Navigation buttons*: these were buttons predominantly part of navigation bars on web pages and offered visitors an invitation to other pages around the website. These buttons often directly signalled to the user the subsequent page they would arrive at on after using of the button (i.e. 'How We Work', 'How We Spend' etc). Such buttons did not specifically hold a call-to-action in how they were presented, nor did they specifically invite a visitor to obtain more information (see below).
>
> *Call-To-Action buttons*: these were buttons that specifically invited the visitor to take an action. Call-to-action buttons were usually (but not exclusively) found within the main content of the pages and often incorporated a message that also included written text and/or imagery. These buttons implied that an action or response would be subsequently facilitated, and often were distinguished from the other buttons through the use of active verbs 'Take Action', 'Donate Now', 'Start Fundraising Today'.
>
> *'More Information' buttons*: these buttons were also usually found within the main body of the webpage and were often incorporated as part of a message unit, although not exclusively so. These buttons were distinct from the above two groupings in that they specifically invited the visitor to obtain more information on a theme/issue already being discussed. In other words, these buttons marked an invitation to extend engagement on a theme/issue that the user was already interacting with.

While all buttons were included within the content analysis, the analysis focused on unpacking the types of actions promoted through Call-To-Action buttons. This was due to the fact that the rationale for this supplementary analysis was based on discursive trends regarding the construction and facilitation of public (re)action and responsibility. The CDA has noted an ambiguity between how these discourses framed invitations to respond and the subsequent

facilitation of these responses. This ambiguity required a focus on the "Call-To-Action" buttons that explicitly prompted responses from the visitors, while also examining what information or responses such buttons actually facilitated by the website itself.

Using Adami's (2015) conceptualisation of the syntagmatic meaning of clickable buttons, the content analysis examined the buttons in terms of the actions promoted by the Call-To-Action buttons. This examination was based on the content and the design of the button itself (i.e. what it asked of the visitor or what it promoted), and the message it was positioned alongside. Additionally, using Adami's (2015) conceptualisation of the paradigmatic meaning of clickable buttons, the content analysis also recorded what actions/information buttons subsequently led the user to. An analysis of the buttons' subsequent facilitated actions was determined through a brief examination of what the web pages offered to visitors (i.e. what actions or information did the subsequent webpages offer to visitors). The actions and/or information facilitated by the webpages were coded along 11 groupings that emerged from the analysis itself. The facilitation of responses were grouped and coded along the following distinctions:

> *Donation Facilitation*: these pages led the 'user' to a page that facilitated the online transaction of donation between to the organisation. These pages contained an online form for the donors' financial details and facilitated the choice of donation amount. Often these pages offered a choice between donation amounts as a prompt.
>
> *Fundraise Registration*: these pages provided the user with opportunity to register an interest in taking part in a fundraising event, or indeed to register an intent to start their own fundraiser (depending on the case study organisation). Again, these pages prompted the registering of details such as name, address and contact information, other information gathered depended on the case study in question.
>
> *Petition Sign*: these pages facilitated the use to sign a petition as part of broader campaigns in Trócaire's website. While these pages were only evident in one of the case studies, their salience within discourse produced by Trócaire in the CDA warranted their inclusion in the coding of this analysis.
>
> *Download EDUCATION content:* pages that facilitated the downloading of content (usually PDFs) pertaining specifically to development education i.e. classroom resources, development education material

Download FINANCIAL REPORTS: pages that facilitated the downloading of financial reports. Given that the CDA highlighted the influence of transparency and accountability discourses some of the websites, the facilitation of downloading financial reports was distinguished from other downloads

Download POLICY/RESEARCH content: pages that permitted the user to download material specifically relevant to the principles of the organisation's approaches to interventions. Again, given the prioritisation of policy and focus on models of approaches raised by the CDA in some of the case studies, the facilitation of downloading policy documents, strategy reports and research papers was considered distinct from other downloaded content.

The provision of more DONATION INFORMATION; these were pages that clickable buttons subsequentially led to the website visitor to information specific to the theme of donation; either about donation campaigns, or information about types of donation such as regular giving, legacy giving, tax-reclaims etc…

The provision of FUNDRAISE information: pages that provided information about fundraising campaigns or taking part in fundraising events. These were distinct from pages that facilitated the actual registration for fundraising.

The provision of CAMPAIGN information: these were pages in Trócaire where information contained within the pages did not contain the facility to sign a petition, but they did contain information specific to the campaign related to the petitions.

The provision of EDUCATION information: pages where information pertaining specifically to development education or the provision of education courses.

The provision of more GENERAL INFORMATION; these were pages where clickable buttons brought the 'user' to pages that contained information that was not specific to public participation nor particular responses such as donation or fundraising.

It must be noted that the findings from this content analysis did not provide a comprehensive examination of the buttons, particularly as it did not allow for considerations around the salience of clickable buttons (i.e. how prominent they appeared in relation to other content on a page). This highlighted the importance of CDA as the core analytical tool for this research. Using a content analysis alongside a CDA highlighted that while some actions had a relatively

low frequency, their design and positioning within more dominant message units/webpages saw them attributed with a significant and more salient role in the prioritisation of discourse. For this reason, the content analysis of clickable buttons was confined to specific trends emerging from the CDA. Furthermore, without any audience-based research it must be reiterated that the use of these buttons and interpretation of information they led visitors to remains entirely subjective to the user, for which neither the content analysis nor the CDA used in this research can attribute for. The analysis did not reflect how these buttons may (or may not) have been used. As a result, the content analysis and the CDA examined the clickable buttons specifically from the perspective of how they were designed and the actions they prioritised for the visitors. However, as the focus of this research is based on the production of discourses considerations around how responses were prompted and facilitated was sufficient. When considered alongside the CDA findings, the content analysis provided important and insightful findings around the discursive shaping of public engagement and public responses (see Chapter 8). In doing so, the content analysis also provided a level of self-reflexivity to the CDA findings thus responding to critiques of the approach more broadly.

5.6.2 Content Analysis of Visual Depictions of the Global South

Another utilisation of content analysis within this research was an examination of the imagery depicting Global South people and landscapes throughout the four websites. This was informed by findings from the CDA that noted how visual depictions of the Global South changed according to the public engagement objectives being pursued within a website. For example, the CDA highlighted how the representation of suffering children was found to be entwined within webpages and discourses that pertained to donation. Meanwhile positive post-intervention representations of the Global South were noted in instances where discourse focused on demonstrating donor accountability (see findings Chapter 7). A content analysis examined the imagery within the sampled webpages to determine the depictions of Global South people and/or places foregrounded within the imagery. A content analysis of imagery highlighted distinctions between the websites' visual representation of the Global South. The frequency and consistency of specific characterisations were considered alongside the findings of the CDA to consider the organisational priorities being pursued within the websites.

This content analysis focused only on still imagery, as including videos would have skewed result as the sampled data did not contain the same number of video content, nor were all videos similar in length. Initial coding based on the images themselves categorised Global South actors as; 'Global South Women'; 'Global South Male'; 'Global South Child'; and 'Global

South Communities'. Moreover, within these categorisations adjustments were made based on literature (see Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki, 2012). For example in regards a distinction between 'Active'/'Passive' representations, Chouliaraki (2012) argues that a more nuanced considerations of such 'active' modes of representation is required. It is argued that when a Global South 'Other' is rendered active through a demonstration of successful intervention, the subject is effectively re-rendered passive (Chouliaraki, 2012, see also Dogra, 2014). The agency of the Global South actor is depicted as something conditional on the intervention of the NGO and/or donor, this in effect only serves to render the Global South as dependant on the Global North (Dogra, 2014). Thus, the coding categories for visual depiction of Global South women, men, children and communities also distinguished between "POST-INTERVENTION" depictions (i.e. where agency was dependent upon intervention, and "ACTIVE" was used to demarcate an agency depicted in the imagery that was not visibly attributed to any interventions and/or incorporated within narratives of accountability or efficiency). The other coding category for Global South actors was "PASSIVE" noting representations of passivity that depicted the suffering or vulnerability of a Global South actor.

Overall, the coding for this analysis can be summarised as follows:

Global South Women:

The representation of Global South women has been subject to research for decades; Dogra (2014) notes the depiction of Global South women as 'deserving' either by virtue of their vulnerability and suffering, or their potential as socio-economic actors. Within NGO mediation Global South women are either depicted in active modes of economic or agriculture activities, or in more passive modes of depicting their vulnerability and/or suffering due to illness, conflict or extreme weather events. The coding categories for depiction of Global South women in the websites distinguished between "GLOBAL SOUTH WOMAN/POST-INTERVENTION" depictions, where women were dependent upon the intervention, and "GLOBAL SOUTH WOMAN/ACTIVE" where the agency depicted in the imagery was not visibly attributed to intervention or incorporated within narratives of accountability or efficiency. The other coding category for Global South women was "GLOBAL SOUTH WOMAN/PASSIVE" for those representations of passivity depicting a woman suffering or vulnerable. The depiction of motherhood was also counted as an additional depiction whereby a "GLOBAL SOUTH WOMAN/MOTHER" was depicted with her children, these

depictions were found within post-intervention, suffering/vulnerable or active setting and so were attributed to these categories also.

Global South Male:

The lacking depiction of the Global South male figure is as discursively powerful as their presence in depictions according to both Dogra (2014) and Chouliaraki (2006). Global South men, when depicted, are often presented in terms of post-intervention activity, partaking in a development project ("GLOBAL SOUTH MALE/POST-INTERVENTION). The activities are usually restricted to helping construct a building, partaking in a group discussion or working in an agricultural context. However, again as noted above, these post-intervention activities are demarcated from other depictions of agency; where the activity the men are undertaking is not noticeably linked to discourse of effective/successful intervention ("GLOBAL SOUT MALE/ACTIVE"). The depiction of men suffering or vulnerable is also an element of the Global South male representation, however Dogra (2014) noted from her research that it utilised to a far lesser degree than that of suffering women or child.

Global South Children:

Imagery of children are connected to emotive ideals of innocence and childhood (Dogra, 2014; Chouliaraki 2006). Depictions of children suffering and/or vulnerable are used often used to frame a threat of violence, illness, or starvation. In infantilising the Global South through these representations, need is underpinned with a moral obligation and/or urgency. Thus, the imagery of suffering child is an incredibly powerful trope utilised for donation pleas ("GLOBAL SOUTH CHILD/PASSIVE). An additional element relevant to the depiction of children, is the tendency of representations to depict children alone without parents or guardians. This is another attempt to underline the child's vulnerability but also draw the viewer into a moral obligation to take responsibility for the child's future, usually in the shape of a donation. The other depiction of children utilised is the positive depiction of childhood, whereby imagery depicts children playing, studying and/or laughing. Here, positive imagery depicts the ideal of childhood, and draws on the moral notion of universal childhood to emotively engage the viewer with the issue at hand ("GLOBAL SOUTH CHILD/ACTIVE" and "GLOBAL SOUTH CHILD/POST-INTERVENTION").

Global South Groups:

Other depictions of Global South communities were groups of people, who similar to the characteristics already discussed above. Global South groups were often characterised as generic groups depicted as partaking in development programmes and activities such as information workshops or focus-groups (i.e "POST-INTERVENTION"). In other instances, Global South groupings were depicted as taking part in daily activities such as part of a busy urban streetscape or indeed travelling along a rural road (i.e "ACTIVE"). Finally, and quite rare, imagery depicted groups of people characterised as vulnerable or suffering, this was often in the instances of refugees waiting at or travelling to border-camps, or groups of people travelling in search (or passively waiting) for resources and/or services they lack either as a result of conflict, famine, and/or injustice.

Global South Landscape:

In addition to content analysis concerning the depiction of Global South people, the analysis also considered the representation of Global South landscape. This was along a very general but simple demarcation between the negative depictions of Global South landscape (coded as "NEGATIVE LANDSCAPE"), and a depiction of Global South landscape as space of growth, opportunity and/or productivity (coded as "POSITIVE LANDSCAPE").

An important caveat here, notes that the findings from this analysis were not meant as a full visual analysis of the images within the websites; instead the content analysis simply considered the imagery for the presence of markers relating to the coding categories. Additionally, the content analysis here did not account for the salience of the imagery within the webpages, for example many of the images considered within the analysis were quite low-salience and often acted as an aesthetically designed hyperlink. In addition, other images with representational tropes/characters that appeared more frequently through the websites were often found to have very little relevance to the content surrounding it. Thus, the findings from the content analysis considered the role of these visual depictions alongside results from the CDA. However, the content analysis of visual depictions of the Global South did provide some important validating evidence. For example, findings from both CDA and content analysis highlight that construction of aid and development diverged significantly between passive and active characterisations of the Global South (see Chapter 6 and 7). Moreover, CDA noted that

these distinctions reflected specific organisational priorities, particularly in terms of the types of engagement and responses they were promoting. In websites where discourse of income generation was found to be prioritised (see chapter 6 and 8), the content analysis supported findings that saw an evident prioritisation of a negative and passive representation of the Global South within the same websites. Thus, the content analysis of visual depictions of the Global South supported the conclusions drawn from the CDA and contributed significantly to the discussions that are presented within the findings chapters of this thesis (see chapters 6, 7, and 8).

5.7 Methodological Reflections and Concluding Comments

One of the most significant limitations concerning an analysis of the websites was the volume of content and the time involved in manually downloading the websites offline. In the absence of reliable software at the time of archiving, a manual process for data collection and archiving was established to respond to the needs of the research objectives. While every effort was made to ensure a theoretically informed method for archiving, it is possible that some elements of the websites' discursive-shaping capacities were omitted due to the focus on the production of knowledge and web design. In particular, this archiving process did not look to facilitate an in-depth examination around interactivity of the website nor web usability as audience-based engagement was not the focus of this research. Thus, the discursive-shaping capacities that can emerge through the use of these websites was therefore not considered, nor captured within the creation of the archiving process. The archiving process outlined above was only suited to an analysis that focused on the website production and design of knowledge. In drawing together web design principles and visual grammar theory, the data collection process created for this research endeavoured to maintain a rigorous consistent method that responded to the needs of the research objectives.

Given that the archive took the websites offline, the analysis was subsequently limited to the time period at which the websites were archived. As a result, the analysis did not account for any changes in policy or material produced by the organisations after the archiving period finished. For example, in the period since archiving all four case study organisations have changed their websites' interfaces. A possible solution here may have been to reduce the number of websites for analysis, and stagger data collection over a number of phases to capture

some of the changes made. However, for this research a common period of archiving was required so as to ensure the integrity of the project's comparative element. In addition to this, a rudimentary examination of the current websites for each organisation noted that while the aesthetics and web design had undergone significant changes in three of the websites in particular, the content remained relatively similar (if not the same in most instances) to that which was archived and dominant discourses that had been found through the CDA remained prioritised. Thus, in the context of what this research aimed to achieve, keeping the four websites offline was judged to be more fruitful than allowing for the changes in websites over a period of time. However, longitudinal research focused on an organisation's website over a period of time could provide some interesting empirical insights with regards the elements that inform changes by an NGO.

Moreover, the research utilised the websites so as to consider the various contexts that an organisation produces knowledge for the public; the layered framework was therefore important to maintain the website's structure offline. However, the number of webpages increased exponentially with each layer, this led to a vast range of webpages in each archive that varied both in content and relevance. This also contributed to a significant rate of repetition amongst each archived website. The frequency at which a page emerged more than once during the random sampling process for example highlighted how the archiving process had not accounted for this repetition.[8] Moreover, the random sampling could not ensure a consistency in terms of type of representational modes that were subject to analysis. Some of the sampled webpages contained more visual imagery than others, while other webpages contained larger volumes of text. Other sampled webpages from the websites had more relevancy to certain research objectives than others, this may have also impacted analysis. For example, more country profiles sampled in a website contributed to a more in-depth knowledge of how that website constructed poverty, aid and development. While the more webpages regarding public participation and fundraising would provide more information for analysing how the organisation shaped public responses. It was in such instances, that the familiarity provided by the archiving process came to be particularly invaluable; any concerns regarding such inconsistencies or imbalances within the sampled webpages could be considered in regards the website as a whole and any major oversights could be flagged. The sampling in this research

[8] In the instances where webpages repeated over the course of sampling, sampling continued until 46 different webpages were sampled for each website.

was found to have reflected a fair representation of the overall websites. Again, an alternative research project that focuses on a particular element/theme of an organisation's communication may have been able to archive pages that were relevant to the study. Although, such a focus would continue to require an archive that was offline and ultimately maintained the website's hierarchical structure.

Overall, the analytical framework worked effectively throughout the four examinations of the websites, predominantly because it was informed by the requirements of the research objectives and emerged through an engagement with the websites themselves. The manual archiving process was found to add considerable value and insight to the creation of the analytical framework, in addition to providing a rigorous and consistent mapping process for each case study website. As the chapter has demonstrated, while Fairclough's (1993) CDA provided a framework suitable to respond to the research objectives of this thesis (particularly its focus on intertextuality and interdiscursivity), the multimodality within the webpage required a more systematic process of analysis to ensure consistency and rigour across all four websites. As a result, the incorporation of web design principles and visual grammar were a central part of this methodological framework, including the archiving process, and the preparation and analysis of the webpages. In addition to this, Adami's (2015) framework provided an important theoretical approach to incorporating the clickable buttons into the analysis of the webpages' production of discourse. Finally, additional content analyses of the websites' visual depictions and clickable button were found to provide further empirical evidence to the CDA analysis, and in doing so underscored the validity of adaptions that had been made to the textual analysis. Combined together as methodological framework, this mixed methods approach to the websites provided the scope to produce insightful and important points for discussions around the NGOs' production of knowledge about poverty, aid and development and public support their websites.

The following four chapters in this thesis relate to the findings that emerged from this analytical framework, Chapter 6 outlines the case studies' construction Global South poverty, crises and suffering. Building on this, Chapter 7 discusses the organisations' construction of aid and development, while the findings relating to the construction of public responsibility are the subject of Chapter 8's discussions. Chapter 9 draws together the discussions in the previous three chapters, contextualising the organisations' capacity and willingness to produce counter geographies for their publics.

6. CONSTRUCTING POVERTY: SUFFERING, CAUSALITY & CRISIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter responds to research objective one, analysing understandings of Global South poverty prioritised by each organisation:

To examine how each case study NGO website discursively constructs the Global South 'Other', critically examining the key understandings promoted around issues of inequality, suffering and/or crisis.

The discursive construction of poverty from each case study website was examined using the analytical framework outlined in Chapter 5. This chapter unpacks the construction of Global South poverty by first examining how Global South people and place was represented across the four case study websites. In considering the performance of geographical knowledge that dominated narratives of poverty, suffering and crisis, the first section examines how the websites' representations operated in relation to such discourse. Secondly, the chapter examines how each website contributes to a public understanding of Global South poverty, considering how the prioritised knowledge engaged visitors with the complexity and contextuality of poverty, and what understandings were promoted in terms of causality and local capacity. Finally, the chapter highlights the role that donation and promotional priorities played in how each case study website prioritised knowledge about poverty and causality for their website's public audience. In doing so, this chapter highlights the key discourses of Global South poverty that were promoted through the websites, demonstrating a clear linkage between organisational priorities and the possibility for counter-geographical knowledge.

6.2 LOCATING POVERTY: PRODUCING GLOBAL SOUTH IMAGINARIES

Both the CDA and content analysis of visual imagery identified the performance of geographical imaginaries within the four case study websites; the Global South was depicted as helpless and/or passive victims of poverty and humanitarian crises. Webpages included the use of negative statistics, digital mapping, and abstract imagery in the depiction of Global South poverty. Together these depictions presented Global South people and place as geographically ambiguous entities, characterised by stereotypical characterisations. All four case study websites demonstrated a performance of these hegemonic and abstract geographies, however the extent to which these were prioritised by the organisations varied. In the context

of Trócaire for example, while hegemonic geographies did occur, there was an evident prioritisation of more contextually nuanced and corporeal representations of Global South people and place. An examination of these performances provides a foundational step for unpacking how distinctions emerged across the case study websites in their constructions of Global South poverty, suffering and causality. Moreover, as Said (1979) argues, the knowledge produced within these imaginaries provided interesting insight into the interests and priorities underpinning such constructions. An understanding of the imaginaries used to 'locate' Global South poverty, is key to examining the case studies' constructions of poverty.

6.2.1 A Decontextualised Representation of Place: Statistics, Mapping and Imagery

Within the websites, reductive representations of Global South regions consistently comprised of negative statistical data, digital mapping and abstract aesthetical imagery. These depictions portrayed the Global South as a negative, helpless and homogenous region, and this only served to reinforce dominant abstract representations of place that negated diversity, context or agency. In the websites of Concern and Pencils of Promise for example, the consistent use of negative statistical data was found to represent the Global South regions where programmes were carried out. Statistics in both websites highlighted lacks and deficiencies; entire regions became characterised by a lack of resources or services such as schools or food for example. The consequences of these depictions of need were deeply problematic to an understanding of poverty, as they reinforce a paternalistic framing of global inequality (these depictions would also impact the framing of response, see Chapter 8). For example, in Pencils of Promise's website Global South regions were portrayed through statistics describing poor literacy rates, low school enrolment and poor attendance figures.

"Less than 60% of students enrol in secondary school across our communities"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Scholarships

"46% of 12-18 year olds were enrolled in secondary school in Laos in 2012"

"30% of Laos is illiterate, with even higher rates of illiteracy amongst ethnic minorities"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Laos

"48% of age appropriate children are enrolled in secondary school in Ghana"

"33% of the Ghanaian population is illiterate"

"28% of primary school children will drop out before completing primary school"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 3 Ghana

These statistics were often grouped together on webpages including country profiles and webpages pertaining to programmatic themes, these depictions signalled an attempt to describe the scale of challenges facing the organisation in the country. Such depictions only succeed in representing regions as non-descript homogenous areas however, characterised by a lack of secondary school attendance and poor literacy rates (in the case of Laos) or high primary school drop-out rates (in the case of Ghana). Contextual geographies of these regions or issues were not engaged here, despite the importance that local capacities and knowledge have in an understanding (and addressing) education issues in any region (see section 6.3).

Similarly, in Concern's website the use of negative statistics served to describe entire Global South regions through references to grand-scale need and a lack of resources and services. Moreover, these statistics also often occurred in country profile webpages and webpages pertaining to the organisations programmatic themes. As a result, it was these negative statistics that framed the introduction of target-countries and the justification for interventions. The negative statistics presented by Concern, included references to child starvation, poverty measurements, and food assistance:

"One child dies from hunger every 10 seconds"

Concern, Layer 1, Donate Now

"Rwanda is among the poorest countries in the world, ranked 151 out of 187 on the Human Development Index"

Concern, Layer 2, Rwanda

"Most of these [refugees in Lebanon] are living below the poverty line, with less than 52% living on less than $2.40 per day"

Concern, Layer 3, Lebanon

"At least 1.5 million people are now in need of food assistance"

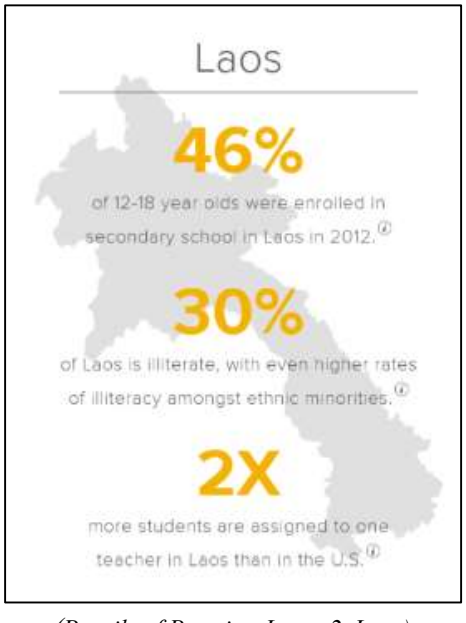
Concern, Layer 3, Mozambique

The statistics referenced a scale of need or a measurement of poverty that worked to characterise entire regions as 'needy', but consequently rendered them passive in the face of wide-scale poverty and/or crisis. The lack of food in Mozambique or the low HDI scoring of Rwanda presented an overly negative and helpless characterisation of both countries for

example; regional capacity and diversity is dismissed completely in such representations. These statistics did not look to situate the suffering or need within any unequal power relations for example, or indeed a geographical diversity that would provide some contextual nuance to the issues mentioned.

A lack of context and diversity was therefore evident on the websites of Pencils of Promise and Concern and their framing of Global South suffering and poverty. The negative framing of regions through statistics was a particularly frequent element throughout both websites' representations of the Global South. Such depictions reflect the work of Gregory (2005) and the performative power of imagined geographies; the use of statistics to represent people and place contributed to a complete negation of corporeality and context of place. Without any surrounding contextual geographical knowledge, Concern and Pencils of Promise stripped entire regions of context, diversity and agency. Instead, the use of statistics within these two websites promoted negative hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South that characterised regions based on resource shortages, suffering and incapacity. Global South helplessness and passiveness were therefore promoted through the use of negative statistics in both websites; this only served to re-produce a patriarchal perspective of the Global South that is predominant within Global North mediated imaginings of poverty and crises more broadly (Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Escobar, 1995).

Another aspect of the case studies' promotion of hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South, was the websites use of digital maps. Again, it was the websites of Pencils of Promise and Concern that demonstrated a geographically ambiguous representation of Global South people and place, through infographics of place and digital mapping. Within the Pencils of Promise's website for example, each country profile webpage contained an infographic outlining the shape of the country to depict communities targeted through their programmes. As Figure 6.1 shows, these graphics contained no additional geographical information; no labels to signal

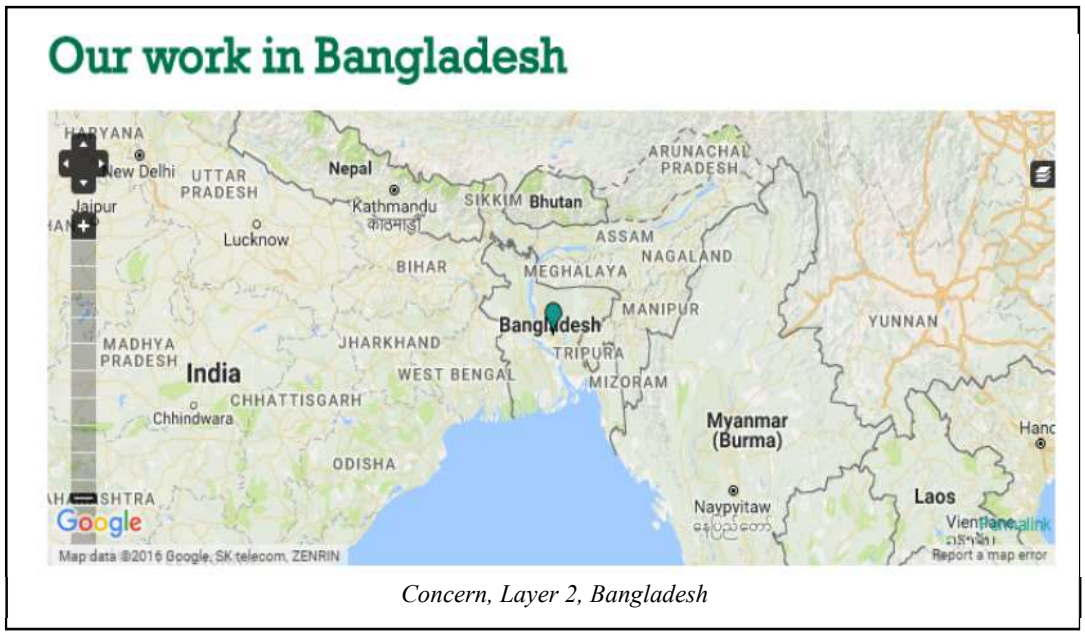


(Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Laos)

Figure 6.1 Pencils of Promise: Iconograph Depicting Statistics and Country Outline

any internal regional context, nor references to surrounding countries that would provide any wider geographical context. The lack of labels on this map of Laos for example, negated any geographical information that situates Laos within a context of south-eastern Asia, much less a wider global contextualisation. Moreover, any national geographical nuance of education issues in Laos was rendered invisible, as the range of statistics regarding the countries educational problems are the only references provided. Given the absence of any additional contextualising information within the texts that accompanied these maps, it can be said that these maps appeared without any contextual or contrapuntal geographies; global, national or regional context were therefore dismissed. This only contributed further to the production of hegemonic imaginings of the Global South that was evident throughout Pencils of Promise's website.

Similarly, Concern's website provided little more contextualising information in its use of digital maps. Again, within each country profile webpage, Concern's website contained an embedded *Google Map* of each region (see Figure 6.2 below). On these maps, green geo-tags depicted Concern's target countries in this case Bangladesh, however the maps did nothing to disrupt the dominance of hegemonic representations prioritised within their website. While these maps were interactive, in that the user could scroll through it, the only information contextualising Concern's presence in Bangladesh is a generic green geo-tag. In terms of the issues faced by communities and Concern's work there, the map (or its interactivity) once again dismisses context or corporeality. Any regional or global context regarding the problems facing Bangladesh for example are not rendered visible to the user either on the map or within any interaction facilitated by it. Thus, in this representation, Bangladesh is only described through a depiction of Concern's presence, this only serves to characterise the region in terms of a helplessness and dependency on aid and development. These digital maps on Concern's country profile pages therefore only compounded the promotion of hegemonic geographical imaginings that were dominant throughout the website.



Concern, Layer 2, Bangladesh

Figure 6.2 Concern's Use of Google Map And Green Geotag Depicting Location Of Their Work

Both Concern and Pencils of Promise's use of mapping therefore reflects Gregory's (2005) own work of performative power of digital maps. Gregory (2005) demonstrated how the use of digital maps particularly in the absence of any additional surrounding contextual information negates the corporeality of place. In such abstractions, the negation of agency, identity or nuance serves an 'Othering' of the depicted regions and people. Given the nature and consistency of use, Concern and Pencils of Promise's use of statistics and mapping on their websites can be considered as performances of hegemonic imaginaries of a Global South 'Other'. These imaginaries reinforce those that are dominant throughout aid and development discourse circulated in the media more broadly. However, these are deeply problematic for critical engaging the public with issues of global poverty and humanitarian crises. First, the dismissal of contextual nuance and corporeality in representations of their target communities/regions conceals the unequal power dynamics that underpin global poverty and the issues being experienced as a result. Secondly, such imaginaries contribute to obstructive public understandings of issues based on helplessness, passiveness and victimhood that dismisses the relational connections between Global South poverty and Global North societies (see section 6.3 in this chapter).

In a somewhat similar depiction of the Global South, the analysis noted Acumen's utilisation aesthetical imagery throughout the website as the only consistent visual representation of Global South landscapes. Acumen's website presented a series of images throughout their website (see Figure 6.3), particularly within webpages concerning country profile pages, programmatic themes, and investee-company profiles.

These images displayed little-to-no direct link to the content within the pages; as opposed to serving the narrative directly in many cases such imagery was shown to provide an aesthetically pleasing page-break within pages of a high-level of written content. However, in the absence of any other visual representation of Global South landscapes on the website, the images of seeds, coffee beans, and crops did serve as a depiction of the Global South as pristine, plentiful and productive. These depictions contributed to an overarching narrative evident within Acumen around the investment opportunity within Global South regions. However, again the denial of locational context and corporeality within these depictions reinforced, as opposed to challenged dominant imaginaries of helplessness, passiveness, and dependency. The untouched productivity depicted through the imagery in addition the lack of local agency or context (see next section), promoted the Global South as a space waiting for Global North investment and expertise. Thus, the imaginaries of Global South regions produced within Acumen's website reflect those same entrenched unequal global dynamics that were evident within Pencils of Promise and Concern's depictions of place.

Acumen, Layer 2, Investment List,

Acumen, Layer 2, Agriculture

Figure 6.3 Acumen's Use of Generic Aesthetic Photography

6.2.2 The Stereotypical Characterisation of Global South Communities

The analyses also identified the stereotypical depiction of Global South people as a significant contributor to a production of geographical imaginaries across all four case studies. Albeit to varying degrees, the selective and reductive characterisation of people in the four websites reproduced imaginings of helplessness, victimhood and/or passivity. For example, the content analysis of the imagery in the websites highlighted two key trends within the stereotypical characterisations utilised; these supported key findings emerging drawn from the CDA regarding how local agency and capacity were discursively constructed. First, the content analysis noted how children and women were the most prioritised characters depicted within representations of Global South people in all four case studies (see Table 1). Secondly, depictions emerged through two distinct representational tropes; positive/post-intervention and suffering/negative, and active (see Table 2). These representations had an important influence on the production of Global South imaginaries, and thus the construction of poverty. The stereotypical representations particularly impacted the construction of poverty and causality with regards how Global South agency and capacity were shaped.

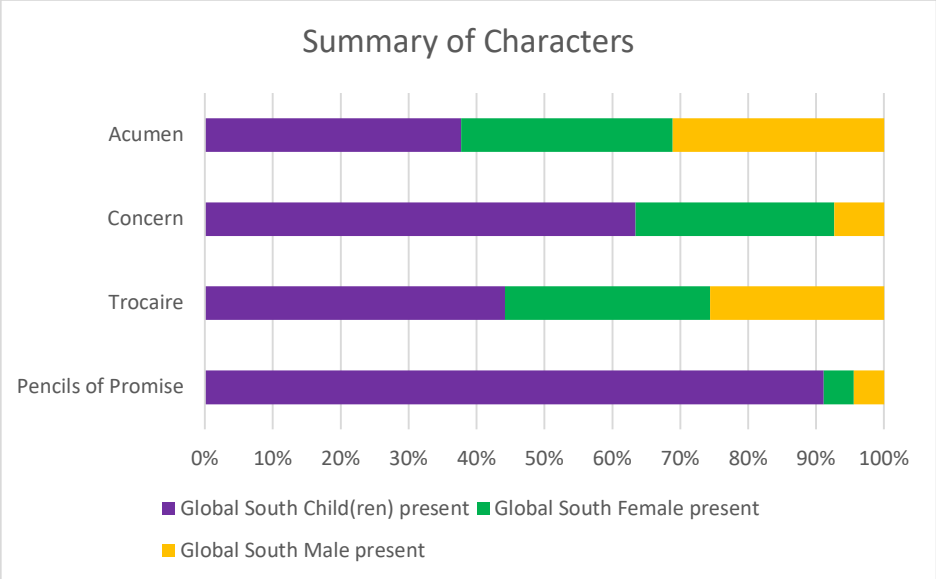


Table 1. Content Analysis Of The Visual Representation Of Global South Characters

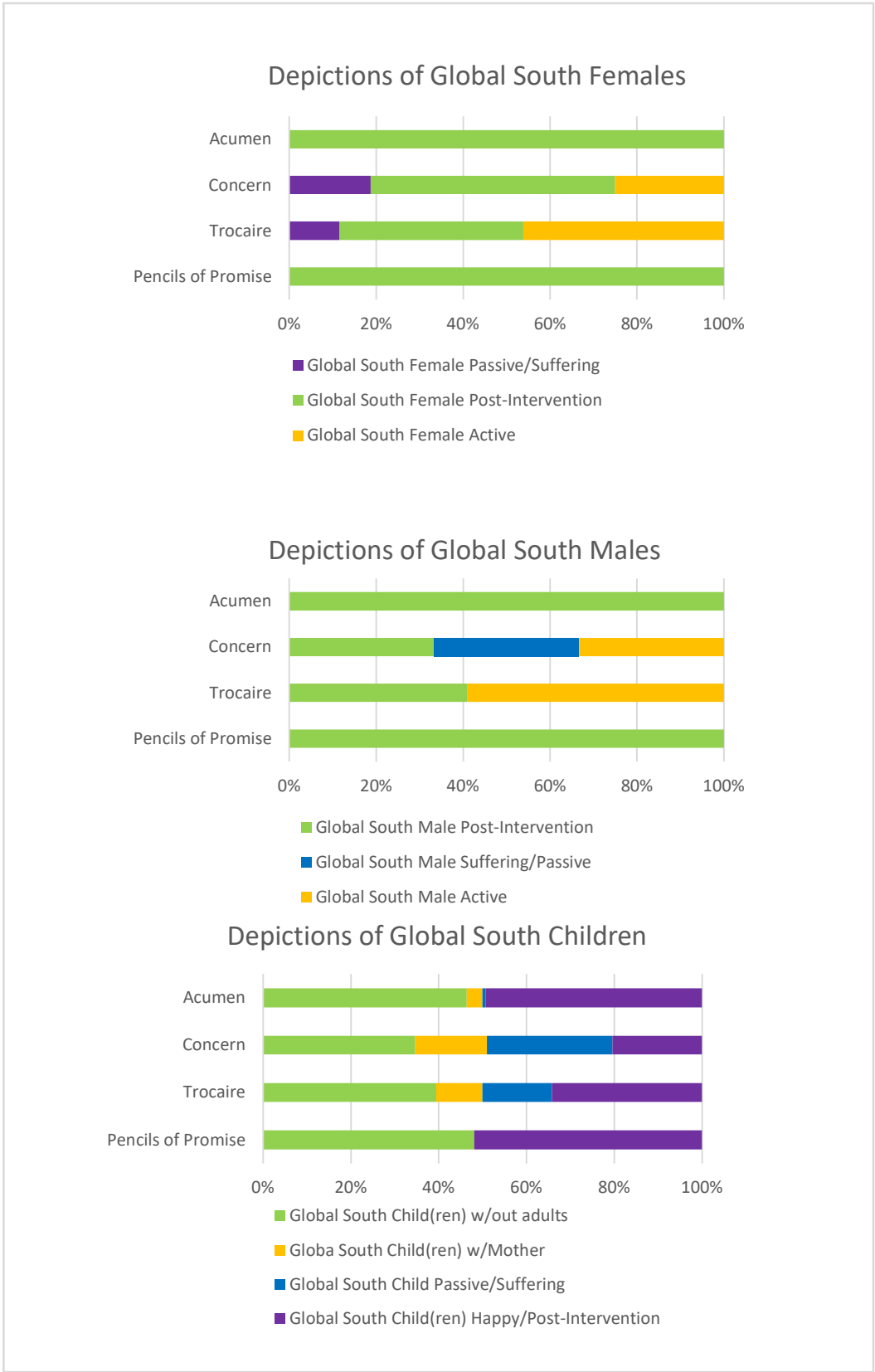


Table 2. Breakdown Of Visual Characterisations Of Global South People

DEPICTING THE 'GLOBAL SOUTH CHILD'

As noted in Table 2 children accounted for the highest characterisation trope within imagery across all the four case study websites. In both Concern and Trócaire's websites, the representation of suffering children was evident both through visual depictions and within the websites' narratives of poverty more broadly. The content analysis noted that the visual representation of suffering children occurred predominantly through the depiction of children looking downcast or distressed as in Figure 6.4 Moreover, images such as those in Figure 6.4 depicting children (i.e. without guardians) on their own accounted for 14% of the overall imagery analysed in both Concern and Trócaire's website.

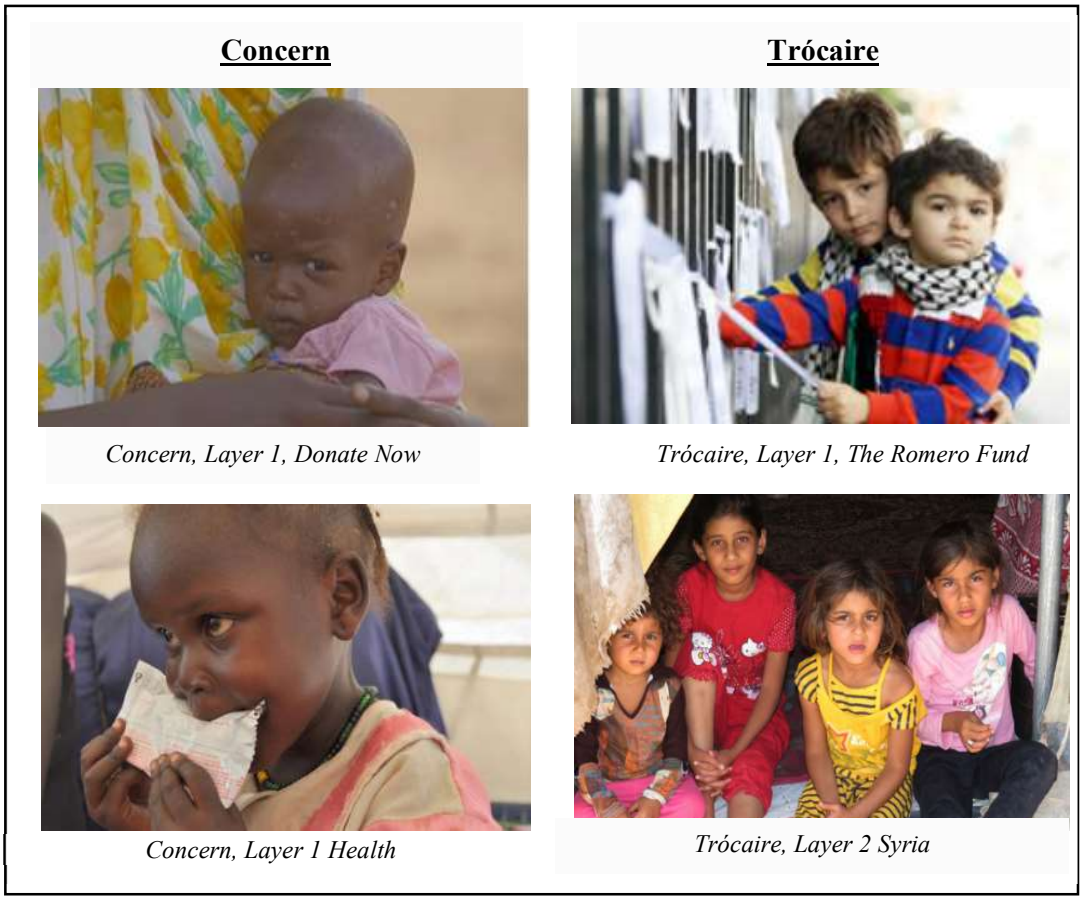


Figure 6.4 Depictions Of Suffering/Passive Children In Concern And Trócaire

In addition to the visual depiction of suffering children, the frequency of which children were referenced through references to threat and vulnerability was particularly striking within Concern's website content:

"No child should have to face the agonising pain of hunger, let alone die from starvation"

"Haroun, from Chad and Leonel from Kenya- are both barely two years old, by virtue of where they were born, they both have to endure the agony of hunger

(Concern, Layer 1 Donate Now)

"€30 could provide a child with lifesaving food for six weeks"

"Help malnourished children like Nyakuma"

(Concern Layer 1, Donate)

"The programme is treating children under 5 to reduce deaths due to malaria, diarrhoea, and pneumonia"

(Concern, Layer 2, Rwanda)

"It is estimated that over 250, 000 people have been killed- a significant proportion of those who have died are women and children"

(Concern, Layer 2, Syria)

"The nutritional status of children is causing great concern in a number of provinces and there has been an increase in school drop-outs"

(Concern, Layer 3, Mozambique)

The quotes above are examples of the references to suffering children used in Concern's construction of issues such as hunger, healthcare and conflict. Such references narrate complex issues such as child mortality, nutrition, illnesses and threat of through the stark and shocking registers of a child's vulnerability and suffering. Similarly, Trócaire's website was found to frame narratives of conflict through references to the impact that such violence has specifically on children. Here, deeply politicalised conflicts within Syria and Gaza are framed through the affective discourse of children's vulnerability and the threat to their safety, lives and health:

"80% of the population in Gaza are dependent on aid. Close to half of all those living in Gaza are children"

"Almost 2,000 people died in the conflict, including hundreds of children"

"I counsel the children affected by trauma of war. They have constant nightmares. Its heart-breaking"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Gaza Project

In stark contrast, the representation of positive/post-intervention through depictions of Global South children was evident throughout all four case studies. On the websites of Acumen, Trócaire, Concern and Pencils of Promise, imagery like those in Figure 6.5 depicted children laughing, playing, accessing resources or services such as education, healthcare and/or water. However, the positive depiction of children was comparatively more prevalent on the Pencils of Promise website; 100% of the imagery depicting children on the websites reflected images such as those in Figure 6.4 depicting students smiling at the camera or laughing with friends.

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Founding Story

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Laos

Concern, Layer 2, Secondary Schools

Concern, Home

Acumen, Layer 1, Investments

Acumen, Layer 1, Ideas

Figure 6.5 Positive Depictions of Children in the Websites

Trócaire, Layer 1, Current Vacancies

Trócaire, Layer1, Trócaire's Work

Figure 6.5 *contd*. Positive Depictions Of Children In The Websites

In considering the performance of imagined geographies, the websites' use of children as characterisations of the Global South is important to note. Regardless of a positive or suffering frame, the analysis of the websites highlighted that the depiction of children ends up contributing similar consequences in terms of public understandings; they perpetuate an understanding of Global South victimhood and helplessness. Existing research regarding the use of children within NGO campaigns argues that children have an incredibly affective power on the donor public (Zarzycka, 2016; Kyriakidou, 2015; Wells, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2006). As noted by Höijer (2004) and Zarzycka (2016) the depiction of children tends to act as a marker of vulnerability, dependence and innocence, making it a highly affective trope for NGO donation campaigns in particular (see Chapter 8 for further discussion). In the context of constructing Global South poverty, the imagery focusing on children's faces for example (like those in figures 6.3 and 6.4) have been found to characterise the Global South as a worthy/disserving victim and evoke a sympathy and compassion based response from Global North publics (Zarzycka, 2016; Höijer, 2004).

However as highlighted within the literature review of this thesis (see section 3.3, Chapter 3), compassion and sympathy is not conducive to a critical engagement with complex issues such as conflict, hunger and/or education for example. In the case of children specifically, Zarzycka (2016) argues that framing an issue through the depiction of children amounts to an overall reductive exercise; the foregrounding of children within a message tends to negate context and dismisses the surrounding social and familial networks that the child is situated within. Instead, it is argued that such representations perpetuate a childlike dependency on Global North actors; or what Dogra (2014) notes as an 'infantilisation' of the Global South. The predominance of children within all four websites' representations of the Global South (both visual and written)

therefore perpetuated these ideas of helplessness and vulnerability. Consequently, this marginalised any engagement with local agency and individual identity within the constructions of Global South children and their experiences of inequality or crises.

Global South Women & Motherhood

Another dominant representation prevalent within three of the four case study websites was the depiction of Global South women, in particular Global South mothers. The content analysis highlighted how this representation of Global South women was more generally distinguished between positive post-intervention imagery and suffering/passive imagery (see Table 3 above). In regards the depiction of motherhood, Concern and Trócaire's websites in particular displayed quite high level of representations of women with their children; of the imagery depicting women 30% of these were mothers/guardians on Trócaire's website and 66% on Concern's. This imagery largely consisted of depictions of a mother holding her child or a mother sitting surrounded by her children such as those in Figure 6.6. However, as with the depiction of children in the discussions above, the visual representations of mothers (either positive or negative) negated any acknowledgement to context. For example, as demonstrated in the images here any external familial or community relations are rendered invisible. Thus, the websites depictions of

Concern, Home Page

Concern, Layer 2, I Want to Debate

Trócaire, Layer 1, Where We Work

Trócaire, Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

Figure 6.6 Depiction Of Motherhood In Concern And Trócaire

motherhood contribute to a notion of isolation, and a subsequent dependency on the Global North for help.

In addition to the visual depiction of mothers, references were also made consistently throughout these websites to maternal-related issues, these included maternal health, child mortality, the capacity of mothers to send their children to school, or access healthcare for their children.

"Women often don't learn their HV status until they are attending ante-natal pregnancy classes"

"In a country like Malawi, with one of the highest rates of maternal, child and infant mortality rates in the world, knowing where to go for care and when to seek it- are integral to reducing maternal and child mortality rates"

Concern, Layer 2, Malawi

"More than 18% of the world's estimated 40 million refugees are women and their children"

Concern, Layer 2, Show Solidarity

"Women and children are particularly vulnerable in the nightmare that Gaza has become"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Gaza Project

"€100 ensures a young mother can deliver her baby safely with the help of a midwife in Somalia"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Lenten Campaign

As the sample of quotations above highlight, complex issues such as access to healthcare, maternal healthcare, and conflict were presented through a narrative of vulnerable motherhood. In such framings Global South mothers were depicted as dependent upon others, to provide care and resources for their children that they could not access. In addition, whether in reference to a problem ongoing, or an issue that has been overcome, both post-intervention and negative narratives characterised Global South motherhood as a homogenous experience subject to continuous threat. Thus, the websites depictions of motherhood only served to extend a notion of isolation and dependency on the Global North for help.

More generally, the representation of the Global South female was also influenced by the negative depiction of the Global South male, particularly within Concern's website. Here, the powerlessness and vulnerability of Global South women was often tied to a negative depiction

of Global South men. For example, representations of Global South women were often implied within references to gender-based violence or gender-based inequalities:

"We also implement protection activities for displaced people in camps in order to reduce the risk of gender-based violence"

"One of the major obstacles for girls staying in school is gender-based violence"

Concern, Layer 2, Malawi

"Women own less than 1% of the world's property"

"Women work 66% of the world's working hours while earning 10% of the world's income"

Concern, Layer 2, Show Solidarity

"(Concern's Lebanon Programme) … strives to build a protective environment for conflict-affected Syrian refugees and vulnerable communities. It specifically targets men […] to prevents and respond to issues such as gender-based violence"

Concern, Layer 3, Lebanon

Here, Concern framed narratives of women's vulnerability and victimhood through a link to male violence (i.e. in refugee camps or at school). In addition, inequalities effecting women were framed in contestation with male-dominated societal norms (i.e. property ownership, income inequality). In these instances, such depictions of vulnerable and powerless women had the effect of constituting that of which they spoke. This helplessness and passiveness was only reinforced through the lack of voice and identity that often accompanied such imagery and/or references. Without any contextualising or situated knowledge regarding the agency of Global South, the representation of vulnerability and powerlessness came to define gender inequality issues.

Moreover, positive post-intervention representations of Global South females ultimately extended this lack of agency and context. In Concern, 75% of imagery depicting women were depictions of post-intervention (depictions such as those in Figure 6.6). The accompanying narratives pertained to women who had successfully completed agricultural training or received resources through Concern programs (see Chapter 7 for further discussion on post-intervention narratives). Similarly, Acumen's overall representation of Global South people were dominated by post-intervention depictions of women. As evident in Figure 6.7 imagery of Global South women within Acumen's website depicted the successful acquisition of a production or services, as provided by Acumen's investee company.

Acumen, Layer 1, Investments

Acumen, Layer 2, Mekele Farms

Concern, Layer 2, Bangladesh

Concern, Layer 1, How Money Is Spent

Figure 6.7 Positive Depictions of the Global South female Concern and Acumen

However, existing research has noted how such positive/post-intervention depictions of Global South people ultimately contribute a representation of passiveness and dependency (Dogra, 2014; Wilson, 2011). Positive framing of people as economic actors or agricultural producers remain tied to Global North intervention and being 'saved'; the provision of goods/services that they did not otherwise possess still renders Global South dependant (Dogra, 2014; Wilson, 2011, see also Chapter 7). In the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern in particular, constructed ideas of Global South poverty that were rooted within these imaginaries of helplessness and dependency.

In terms of other depictions of Global South communities within the websites, there was an evident attempt to 'group' Global South communities into categories of common issues or shared post-intervention success. For example, across the websites of Concern, Acumen and Trócaire, communities are categorised and labelled in relation to a specific problem or threat; "*refugees*", "*HIV/AIDS victims*", "*low-income farmers*", "*poor families*". While Acumen and

Concern also tended to categorise communities in relation to their successful adoption of programmes, "*entrepreneurs*", "*conservation farmers*" "*beneficiaries*" for example. Of all the four case-studies, Acumen's representation of Global South people was predominantly through the visual depiction of and reference to large groups such as "*low income customers*", "*smallholder farmers*", "*leaders*", "*social entrepreneurs*", and "*coffee growers*". This is significant, as the grouping of communities based on a common threat or success offers no contextualising knowledge in regard to the lived experience of the issues they face/overcame. Similar, to the stereotypical characterisations discussed above, the diversity or nuance across instances of suffering and causality was negated. Instead, Global South communities become identified on the basis of a homogenous experience of poverty, or their successful participation in a programme.

Thus, with regards the representation of the Global South, all four case studies were found to have contributed abstract and hegemonic geographical imaginaries. Through statistics, mapping and stereotypical depictions the Global South were reduced down to characterisations of resource deficiencies, suffering and dependency. Consequently, these depictions contributed to the hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South that dominate aid and development discourse more broadly. This paternalistic framing of the Global South perpetuates ideas of helplessness and passiveness that renders a distant 'Other' dependant of the agency of Global North actors (practitioner and websites' visitors). Knowledge about Global South poverty therefore becomes embedded within such decontextualised imaginaries and removed from the historical and geopolitical relationships that within global inequality. As a result, the performance of abstract and reductive geographical representations, the four websites engaged their website-audience with a Global South that remains decontextualised from historical and geographical context. However, the consistency at which these decontextualised imaginaries dominated material within the websites is important to highlight. In particular, Trócaire's website demonstrated a much lower prioritisation of these decontextualised representations than the other three case study websites. This had significant implications for how the constructions of Global South poverty differed across the four websites.

6.2.3 Trócaire's Representation of the Global South

Of all four case studies, Trócaire's website displayed a greater propensity for promoting contextual geographies of the Global South that challenged dominant homogenous imaginaries of passiveness, threat and/or suffering. Rather than agency being rendered dependent upon intervention or negated altogether, the CDA noted how Trócaire's website prioritised a

discourse of Global South poverty as a set of restrained capacities within a given context. Here, the lack of resources or primitive landscapes were not defining characteristics of Global South life, but rather a composite factor of a lived experience. As a result, an important (and distinguishing) element to representations of people and place prioritised within Trócaire's website was the depiction of Global South agency amidst/despite of poverty or crisis (see Figure 6.8).

Trócaire, Layer 3, Closer To People

Trócaire Layer 2 Gaza Reconstruction

Trócaire Layer 2 Burning Question Video

Figure 6.8 Trócaire's Depiction Of Global South Agency Amongst Primitive Or Destructed Surroundings

As the examples above demonstrate, the imagery of the Global South landscape in Trócaire's website depict wooden structures, outdated equipment, bombed out rubble all formed backgrounds through which Global South life continues. In such representations the corporeality of poverty and/or violence was depicted through a reference to local agency. Unlike the Global South agency afforded in positive/post-intervention imagery discussed previously, Trócaire's website representation of Global South agency did not demarcate a point of Global North intervention or narratives of dependency on Global North actors (see Chapter 7). Instead, Global South communities were depicted adapting in the face of challenging or threatening backgrounds:

"Rain is the main source of water for farmers, but climate change is increasing periods of drought"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

"There is pressure on the land which has led to limited space for farming and the keeping of livestock"

"This country also has weak local structures which have led to low participation of citizens in decision-making processes"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Malawi

"The ongoing crisis in South Sudan is aggravating an already fragile socio-economic context, in which many households are at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition both in rural and urban areas"

Trócaire, Layer 3, South Sudan

"As much as 90% of crops have failed in some affected areas leaving people without a source of food and an income"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Humanitarian Response,

"Government are failing to protect these rights as increased demand for food, minerals and energy, coupled with large scale industry cause a scramble for land and water at the expense of the poor"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Food Resource & Rights

As opposed to characterising these countries through a lack of food, healthcare, or corruption, these references highlighted a constrained capacity. For example, the lived experience of South Sudanese communities references the impact that conflict has had on how they access and produce food for example. Similarly, Malawian communities are referenced in regards the challenges they face in caring for their families in light of low agricultural yields or their struggle to gain representation within governing structure. It is not helplessness or passivity that characterised the Global South people and places within these representations, but the constrained opportunities that impact their daily lives. Underpinning such representations, and distinguishing them from stereotypical representations, was Trócaire's evident priority for what Gregory (2005) refers to as contextual and contrapuntal geographies. Representations of local agency were consistently framed through contextual geographies of the Global South, whereby representations were often grounded within specific communities, voiced by those who were directly experiencing the consequences of inequality or injustice.

"My family was in danger, we were very afraid. So we had no choice but to flee in the nights with our baby boy"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

"We are running from war. They took my husband a year ago"

(00.01.27)

"They said they would kill me unless I fought for them"

(00.01.34)

"My parents told me to go because they make young boys become soldiers"

(00.01.47)

"My parents used to tell me there was enough rain before. Even when I was young, I could see this for myself. There was enough rainfall. But during the last thirty years the rain is coming less and less. Its getting more dry.

(00.00.36)

Twenty, thirty years ago there was many forests here. And the river was full of water. But now it is getting drier and there are fewer trees. You can see that. We have a lot of small trees now"

(00.01.41)

"We try to adapt some special cereals for the dry season, but still because of the lack of water, the production is not enough to provide for us. Three of my daughters are staying at home because I couldn't afford to send them to college. That is my wish, that they go to college"

(00.03.01)

Trócaire, Layer 3, Climate Change in Northern Ethiopia

Here, complex problems such as the Syrian Refugee Crisis and climate change were framed through situated accounts of those who are experiencing the impacts. For example, the quotes above depicts a first-hand account of the consequences of climate change on farmers in Northern Ethiopia. Such narratives disrupt dominant hegemonic imaginaries of a Global South communities by highlighting experiences of lower crop yields and the consequences of such. In another instances, the situated experience of Syrian refugees was presented through the words of those who suffered forced migration as a result of targeted violence. Furthermore, while Trócaire did demonstrate a propensity for using statistics within webpages, these were incorporated into a broader representation of contextual and contrapuntal knowledge.

"Most Malawians continue to have a low standard of living, in some regions in the south of the country 92% of households live on less than US$ 1.25 per day, with only 46% of children estimated to finish primary school"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Malawi

"80% of the population of Gaza depend on aid. Close to half of all those living in Gaza are children"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Gaza Project

"Located in the east of Africa, Ethiopia has a population of over 87.9 million. There are more than 80 ethnic groups in the country, and this diversity led to conflict between groups through the 1970s and 80s"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

Similar to Concern and Pencils of Promise, these statistics referenced the scale of suffering and deficiencies i.e. household income, primary school attendance and dependence on aid. However, unlike the other two case studies Trócaire's depiction of statistics through their website incorporated these figures within a broader narrative of issues. For example, the statistics relating to Gaza quoted above and a dependency on aid were situated within a webpage that drew together a range of different contextual dimensions relating to poverty and conflict in Gaza. Humanitarian need in Gaza was contextualised through additional references to blockades, the psychological impact of the violence, and the impact that prolonged violence has had on water and food access. Similarly, references to Malawi's low income and education rates were part of a much more contextual narrative of issues experienced. The statistics regarding the population diversity of Ethiopia and past violence, were situated within a broader webpage narrative that drew together other factors that impact Ethiopians' capacities to access food, a sustainable income and political representation. Across the four websites, Trócaire's accounts of Global suffering signalled the closest thing to Maggie O'Kane's counter narratives (see Theoretical Framework, section 4.3). Symptoms and causality are referenced through the situated knowledge of Global South communities suffering the impact, while being maintained in their own words. As a result, these representations disrupted the stereotypical depictions of helplessness and/or passiveness dominantly used to frame Global South poverty/suffering.

Moreover, contrapuntal geographies consistently emerged within Trócaire's representations of the Global South, where specific Global North structural, normative and/or political dimensions were referenced in terms of their impact on Global South capacities to address issues. Particularly in webpages pertaining to the organisation's awareness-campaigns (see Chapter 8), Trócaire's depictions of the Global South were found to draw linkages between Northern societies, political and economic structures and Global South communities.

"The world stood by in 1994 as genocide was unleashed on Rwanda. One year later, we again stood aside as thousands were massacred in Srebrenica. We can't let Aleppo become another Srebrenica"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Take Action

"Climate change is driving hunger and poverty around the world, so don't let the Irish government or the Northern Ireland Assembly bury their heads in the sand, we need action"

" …[it is]…the links between hunger and drought in African countries like Malawi and developed countries' reliance on fossil fuels that drive climate change"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Be A Climate Activist

The examples above show how Trócaire's framing of problems such as climate change and the Syrian Refugee Crisis situated the Global South within unequal and unjust global structures. Here, relational connections were drawn between food insecurity across Africa and the Irish government's policy on fossil fuels, or indeed the lack of public and political response is linked to the violence and suffering experienced in Aleppo. In this way, contrapuntal geographies of the Global South situated issues within broader unequal global systems and the website visitor's own life (see Chapter 8 for further discussion).

The CDA however did highlight a notable exception within Trócaire's production of contextual geographies in their websites; the production of hegemonic geographies underpinning donation narratives relating to conflict. As discussed above, Trócaire's representations of children in Gaza and Syrian refugees for example were occasionally depicted suffering the consequences of violence and displacement. These representations that emerged through webpages pertaining to donation were reflective of those more dominant stereotypical characterisations discussed in the previous section and perpetuated ideas of Global South helplessness and victimhood. However, while Trócaire's website did contribute to broader dominant hegemonic representations of the Global South, there was a clear prioritisation evident throughout their website for more contextually nuanced geographical knowledge within their representations of people and place.

In summary, the production of Global South imaginaries prioritised through the four websites noted a performance of hegemonic and abstract geographies in representation of the Global South. The use of negative statistics, mapping and stereotypical characterisations are examples of how all four case studies used abstract and hegemonic geographical knowledge to contribute to dominant imaginaries of the Global South. In regards the websites' potential for producing counter-geographies of aid and development, Gregory (2005), Koopman (2011) and Toal (2010) demonstrated that in order to produce a counter-narrative of people and place,

contextual geographies and situated knowledge are required. As a result, representations that highlight contextual and corporeality of place are considered vital to this. In the representations prioritised in the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise such a promotion of contextual geography was not evident; Global South agency diversity and identity was largely negated within the representations prioritised by these three case studies. On the other hand, representations prioritised through Trócaire's website demonstrated an attempt to maintain contextual geographies in depicting the Global South. The divergence between hegemonic and contextual geographies across the websites therefore reflected a key distinction in regard to how the case study websites explained Global South poverty.

6.3 Explaining Poverty: Constructions of Global South Poverty

The distinction between the websites' performance for hegemonic and contextual geographies reflected the constructions of poverty prioritised by the organisations. In several ways all four case study websites contributed to an uncritical and simplified construction of poverty through the performance of hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South. However as outlined below, Trócaire's website prioritised the counter-geographical (Gregory, 2005) representation of the Global South that contributed a more contextually nuanced construction of poverty, suffering and causality.

6.3.1 Soft Constructions of Poverty

Within the websites of Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise, discourse around global poverty and humanitarian crises prioritised a narrative of deficiency. Narratives concerning complex issues such as food security, education and gender equality were all reduced down into an uncritical and simplified construction pertaining to lacks; lack of resources such as food and water, school services or the lack of rights or unjust social norms experienced by women. This construction of poverty reflects Andreotti's (2006) work on soft understandings of global poverty. The uncritical and simplified narratives of Global South poverty were tied to hegemonic geographies; complex issues pertaining to inequality and humanitarian crises are rooted in ideas of Global South helplessness and passivity. As a result of such imaginaries an understanding of causality and suffering becomes decontextualised and dehistoricised. The implications of such constructions result in a lack of critical engagement with the complexity and contextual nuance underpinning problems of global inequality for the public (Andreotti,

2006). The constructions of poverty prioritised throughout the websites of Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise therefore can be said to have promoted soft understandings for their websites' visitors.

Throughout Concern's website for example, the hegemonic imaginaries prioritised throughout the website resulted in a narrow and decontextualised soft construction of Global South poverty. Issues such as household income, healthcare, livelihoods and childhood malnutrition were all condensed down into emotive narratives of lacks:

"Many of the countries where Concern works are highly vulnerable to emergencies as a result of conflict and natural disasters"

Concern, Layer 1, Emergencies

"Thousands of children all around the world are suffering because of a lack of food"

Concern, Layer 1, Donate Now

"We are aiming to improve women's access to high quality reproductive health service"

Concern, Layer 2, Malawi

"Most people are living below the poverty line, with 52% living on less than $2.40 per day."

Concern, Layer 3, Lebanon

"Very few households (less than 10%) are expected to harvest any cereals this season"

Concern, Layer 3, Mozambique

Narratives regarding the lack of food, safety, crops, income and healthcare were utilised to 'explain' deeply complex and context-dependant issues, prioritising a soft understanding of poverty and causality for the public. A dominant issue throughout Concern's website for example was food (in)security, here narratives focused on the lacks and deficiency engaged the public with reductive and uncritical understandings of complex and multi-dimensional issues. Problems such as malnutrition, famine and food insecurity were reduced down into simplified narratives of lacks; the lack of food, the lack of crops and poor health related to food shortages. This negates any consideration of the causal elements that contribute to the lack of food in any given context. Concern constructed problems related to food insecurity as lack of food that ultimately negated the any public engagement with the series of circumstances and constrained capacities that impact communities' access to food.

The promotion of soft understandings of food insecurity has been noted as a deeply obstructive factor in food aid, as public (donors) fail to engage with the multi-dimensional nature of food insecurity and famine (see Slota, 2018). Howe (2018) for example, states how a more contextualised understanding of causality is required by donors (and practitioners) in order to effectively tackle issues relating to food insecurity. According to Howe (2018) food insecurity needs to be understood as a function of interrelated contextual factors that disrupts a community's access to food (*including* their resilience to avoid levels of insecurity deteriorating). For example, researchers (see Howe, 2018; Maxwell et al., 2016; O'Grada and Dyson, 2000) have argued that the impact conflict and extreme weather will have on food insecurity is mitigated by contextual factors that restrict a households' capacity to access food. From this perspective, causal factors such as pre-existing food security issues, a dependence on farming for livelihoods, or a households' dependence on a specific crop will all erode a community's capacity withstand a disruption to a food source (Howe, 2018). In addition to such factors, an individual's experience of food insecurity has been related to a person's livelihood and/or their social identity (Maxwell, et al., 2016; O'Grada and Dyson, 2000). Researchers therefore argue that issues relating to food insecurity are entirely context-specific; causal factors are spatially (and temporally) determined and thus will manifest differently across contexts. In the context of the website's construction of poverty, narratives prioritised in Concern's website around the lack of food do not highlight the multi-dimensional and contextual nature of food insecurity problems. Causality was ambiguously tied to grand narratives of extreme weather and/or conflict reinforcing an imaginary of Global South helpless and passiveness in the face of such events. The narratives of famine and malnutrition prioritised in Concern's website does not contextualise causality, prioritising instead a reductive one-dimensional public understanding focused on the lack of food.

Another dominant issue within Concern's website was related to gender equality; issues pertaining to gender equality in Concern's website were framed in terms of deficiencies in political representation and decision-making, a lack of safety, and lack of maternal healthcare, education and livelihoods. Similar to the construction of food security issues, the contextual and complex character of gender equality issues was negated in the construction prioritised by Concern for their website audience(s). Representations of women and mothers prioritised through the website underpinned this reductive construction of gender equality, as registers of helplessness and victimhood framed causality. Discourses associated with gender inequality promoted an uncritical understanding of causality, where grand ambiguous references to

primitive cultural norms, male attitudes and the instability of conflict were used to 'explain' issues. Moreover, without highlighting the contexts in which such capacities are restrained, these soft constructions of gender inequality and injustice were presented as a homogenous experience for women in the Global South.

Yet, many studies have noted the regional and community specificities integral to understanding gender inequality issues (Adukia, 2014; Lin et al., 2014; Linde, 2013). In particular, cultural and societal norms have been found to place significant constraints not only on the capacities afforded to women, but also on the impact that gender equality policies can have on enhancing these capacities. For example, in the Middle East and North Africa societal beliefs regarding women's position in the home and family has been linked to problems in low employment figures (Adukia, 204; Linde, 2013). These low employment levels have subsequently been found to have negative implications for female autonomy in the home and in society more generally (Alesina et al., 2013). Meanwhile in both Indian and China, regional cultures and societal practices have been found to inform a greater desire for sons, this has skewed the demographic ratio between male/females (Jayachandran, 2014; Lin et al, 2014). Again here, such contextual factors impact on the human capital investment placed on females within these societies (Jayachandran, 2014; Lin et al, 2014). Within these societies, structures and service pertaining to governance, health, education etc are all consequently impacted by these skewed demographics. Thus, the experience of gender inequality issues are far from homogenous given the interplay of contextual factors. The constructions of gender-based issues prioritised in Concern's website fails to highlight the importance of context however, instead engaging their visitors with an uncritical and hegemonic understanding based on the lacks; the lack of safety, healthcare and/or education.

Similarly, Pencils of Promise's website prioritised a narrow and uncritical engagement with Global South poverty, whereby soft understandings of education issues was promoted for their website's audience. Throughout the website, poverty was framed exclusively through the lens of education-specific issues, negating any linkages between educational and non-educational factors. The Global South imaginaries prioritised throughout Pencils of Promise's website perpetuated a hegemonic and passive representation of people and place, supporting this production soft understandings of education. Narratives framed problems regarding education access and quality as a series of lacks in resources, facilities and abilities. For example, the CDA noted numerous references to lacks in teacher capacities and schooling facilities, in

addition to references regarding the lack of literacy skills, low enrolment figures and poorly trained teachers:

"For many children, a backpack, a uniform, a freshly sharpened pencils the first day of secondary school are out of reach"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Scholarship

"*250 million children of primary school age lack basic reading, writing and math skills"*

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Teacher Support

"Two times more students are assigned to one teacher in Laos than in the Unites States"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Laos

"Students miss 272 million school days due to preventable illness"

"Most classrooms contain little to no engaging bools for students"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, WASH

In this framing of education, problems such as illiteracy rates or primary school enrolment are decontextualised from their specific casual dimensions. As noted in the examples above, soft constructions promoted by Pencils of Promise for public engagement failed to capture the multi-dimensional character of problems such as literacy, school facilities and enrolment. However, research has found that issues like education access, enrolment, attendance and illiteracy are all symptomatic of broader underlying factors (Masino and Nino-Zarazua, 2016). Teaching wages, government budgets, societal norms, household income, labour supply within the household, extreme weather are all factors that have been found to contribute negatively to problems of education access and quality (Masino and Nino-Zarazua, 2016). Moreover, the impact these causal elements have on education quality and access are temporally and geographically determined (Masino and Nino- Zarazua, 2016). For example, in countries/regions where second-level education systems are not accessible or well-established this poses as a major obstruction to incentivising families and communities to value primary school attendance (Masino and Nino-Zarazua, 2016; Camacho, 2015). Thus, poor literacy levels, teacher numbers, and the lack of basic facilities are multi-dimensional problems that extend beyond a lack of school facilities and teachers.

However, Pencils of Promise did not engage their website's visitors with an understanding of the range of social and economic factors that may be contributing to the problem. Instead, imaginaries of people and place were fixed around the students and schools, negating the role

of external (yet deeply relevant) social and familial contexts. In their prioritised representations of Global South communities, Pencils of Promise very rarely depicted the role of family and governments for example, references to wider economic, political and social context were also negated despite their influence on issues of education quality and access within Global South regions (Camacho, 2015). Like Concern, the soft construction of education issues promoted by Pencils of Promise therefore failed to situate education within any broader social context, thus contributing to uncritical and narrow understandings of poverty and causality. Ultimately, the Global South imaginaries prioritised throughout Pencils of Promise's website perpetuated a hegemonic and passive representation, this supported the dominance of soft understandings of education promoted for their website's visitors.

Acumen's construction of poverty also prioritised a focus on lacks throughout their website. Acumen prioritised narratives of poverty that were confined to the lack of sufficient income within Global South communities, and the subsequent lack of affordable resources/services within such low-income communities. While narratives reference problems around access to resources and services, causality is fixed to the lack of income and livelihoods; communities' access to resources is explained by a lack of sufficient income. Within such constructions, low income and income inequality is discussed at the causal factor to the experiences of poverty:

"While stable governments and economy growth have helped grow the middle class, more than $80 million people live on $4 a day"

Acumen, Layer 1, Latin America

"West Africa is home to three of the top 25 fastest growing countries in the world. Yet wealth that has been generated hasn't trickled down to lowest-income homes"

Acumen, Layer 1, Regions

"Although East African economies have continued to grow over the past few years, income inequality remains high in both rural and urban areas – from framers and slum dweller."

Acumen, Layer 3, East Africa

Thus, the public understandings global poverty promoted by Acumen negated any considerations around non-income-based dimensions of causality. Moreover, this construction of poverty dismissed completely a level of poverty below that experienced by low-income customers. For example, there was no acknowledgement of communities in Acumen's target regions where Acumen's work would not benefit, nor did Acumen acknowledge implications of any humanitarian crisis that existed these regions. As a result, the understanding of poverty promoted by Acumen dismissed the impact that humanitarian crises and severe poverty will

have on a communities' capacity to enhance income and benefit from it. Instead the constructions of poverty prioritised by Acumen negates the influence that non-income factors have on the problems experienced in these communities.

Research has been deeply critical of such one-dimensional definitions of poverty that focus on income (Alkire et al., 2015; Sen, 2009). Understandings of poverty focused solely on income-based indicators alone have been found notoriously ineffective in capturing (and addressing) experiences of poverty (see Nayrayan et al., 1999). For example, studies have continuously highlighted how an increase in household income is not conducive to subsequent improvements in other non-income-based problems (Alkire et al. 2015). Critics have also noted that increases in household incomes do not tend to equate to advancements in problems pertaining to gender equality or progresses in child mortality rates (Alkire, et al., 2015; Camacho, 2015). Thus, Acumen's framing of poverty as a problem of low-income is deeply reductive; it does not acknowledge the web of non-income dimensions that contribute to problems experienced by low-income communities. Acumen's construction of poverty there for is a process similar to those prioritised by Concern and Pencils of Promise; soft narratives of issues contribute public understandings that negates context and complexity.

Overall within the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern, where constructions of poverty were prioritised as a series of lacks, soft public understandings conceptualise causality as a one-dimensional problem related to Global South passiveness and/or helplessness. This was as opposed to engaging the websites' public audience with a more complex and contextualised framing of poverty and causality. Soft understandings prioritised by Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise were found therefore to negate the multidimensionality of Global South poverty. In the context of this research's central aim, such constructions are problematic for a critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourse. Amartya Sen (1993) states that a focus on deprivation is deeply problematic to critical conceptualisations of global poverty, as it negates the underlying causal dimensions that restrict the capacities of individuals to access and utilise resources or services. Poverty is therefore inherently socially, spatially and temporally determined (Bartlett and Minujin, 2009; Gray and Maseley, 2005; Sen, 1993). An individual's experience of a lack of education, food insecurity or low-income for example are therefore shaped and informed through a series of underlying and interconnected social, political, economic and environmental variables. The constructions prioritised by Concern, Pencils of Promise and Acumen dismissed critical public

engagement with these dynamics and variabilities that determine the ability to access and uses these goods and resources (Sen, 1992; 1993; 2009).

On the other hand, the frequency at which Trócaire produced counter-geographies of the Global South resulted in a prioritisation of poverty narratives that was contextually nuanced; narratives emerged where issues were unpacked into a series of interconnected factors specific to a certain theme, place, or community. In country profile pages for example, poverty is presented as a series of different issues with a range of interrelated causal factors:

"Although the Ethiopian economy has been improving recently, the gap between rich and poor is growing"

"In 2013, an estimated 800,000 Ethiopians were living with HIV, while 900, 000 children have been left without parents as a result of the disease"

"There are more than 80 ethnic groups in the country, and this diversity led to conflict between groups throughout the 1970's and 1980's"

"There has been peace since 1991, but the space for civil society has suffered in more recent years"

"Most of the country's rural population rely on farming to feed themselves"

" …is currently experiencing one of the worst droughts in the last 30 years. The two main rainy seasons- that supply over 80% of Ethiopia's agricultural yield and 85% of the workforce- were not successful"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

Here Ethiopia's country profile page was found to promote public understandings of poverty through a series of contextual factors that have caused obstructions to accessing services or resources. Trócaire's construction of food security on this webpage therefore was specific to a region, and included description of various causal elements such as a fractured economic and political landscape, an over-reliance on agriculture, insufficient access to irrigation processes, the increasing risk of extreme weather on crops, and a large proportion of populations living with poor health. Here the contextual geographies situated Ethiopia's food insecurity within a historical, geopolitical and environmental context. This contrasted with the dominant narrative of food insecurity produced by Concern, where the lack of food is 'explained' through representations of suffering and passivity.

Elsewhere, Trócaire's webpages pertaining to programmatic themes contextualised issues around specific communities. This was evident where the refugee crisis was discussed through a range of different narratives highlighting problems effecting different communities within

different regions. A narrative concerning refugee camps in Lebanon for example unpacked a set of contributing causal influences impacting refugee crisis in the area:

"Lebanon already lacks in resources - also the fact that the refugees are not recognised as refugees but are named immigrants. This doesn't allow them refugee status and therefore there's no way for them to get help. Over and above that, now refugees cannot get legal papers, residency papers, so it makes it very difficult for them to even move out of the camps that they are in, let alone they can't get work permits, and if they do work then it's illegal work - a lot of times they're extremely underpaid, if they do get paid at all"

Yasmin Kayali

00.00.23

Trócaire, Layer 2, Life In Lebanon

Here, issues regarding refugees' health, wellbeing and safety were impacted by a range of temporal, political and spatial factors. For example, pre-existing pressures at the border impact conditions facing refugees within the camps, while the ambiguous policy for processing refugees and the lack of legal papers prolong the time refugees have to remain there. A nuanced construction of poverty also emerged in the instances where narratives presented a community's experience of an issue. For example, a video focusing on health in Malawi unpacked the consequences that healthcare shortages have in contributing to/exasperating other health issues within a particular community. The narrative demonstrated that health of individuals within the community were impacted by a series of interconnected factors restricting community's access to health services:

"*As a country we face a lot of challenges in the health sector, for examples serious shortages of healthcare workers whereby you have health facilities having one clinical officer working twenty-four hours, which in the end compromises quality of service but also problems to do with inadequate health facilities. Communities have to walk some twenty or thirty kilometres to access health services of the nearest facility- in addition to shortages of medicine and medical supplies"*

Martha Kwataine, Director of Malawi Health Network

(00.14.27)

Trócaire, Layer 3, Closer To People

The narrative demonstrated how a problem of personnel shortages contribute the community's access to health assistance, and the quality of available facilities. These shortages in turn impact on the distances some individuals are from adequate health services, ultimately impacting the health of the community itself. The issue of healthcare access is therefore more nuanced; causal

elements impacting the provision and quality of healthcare are unpacked and linked to a series of specific contextual dimensions.

These three constructions are demonstrative of trends operationalised more broadly throughout Trócaire's website to engage their users with issues of Global South poverty. Trócaire's narratives of Global South poverty are by no means exhaustive accounts of problems such as healthcare in Malawi or the refugee crisis at Lebanon's border. However, in comparison to the other three case studies, Trócaire' demonstrates an evident and consistent attempt to extend their website users' understanding of Global South poverty beyond symptoms; engaging them instead with a more multi-dimensional framing of poverty. Researchers and practitioners alike have highlighted the importance of engaging the multi-dimensionality of issues like hunger, gender-equality, education and income generation. For example, Nayrayan et al's (2007, p.27) seminal research of poverty found that those who experience poverty did not define problems based on singular lacks; "*poverty never results from the lack of one thing, but from many interlocking factors that cluster*". Instead, a more nuanced public engagement with poverty is increasingly required as global inequality trends continue to grow and require a more multi-faceted approach to addressing issues. Reflecting this, a report detailing the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals programme highlighted the ever-growing need for a multi-dimensional understanding of poverty; "*transitioning to more sustainable and resilient societies requires an integrated approach that recognises that these challenges- and there solutions- are interrelated*" (United Nations, 2018, p. 14). Such a shift in practition and policy requires a public (donor) engagement with poverty that is contextualised within its multiple and interlinked dimensions.

In the context of this research, Trócaire's website came closest to engaging their visitors with such narratives. Underpinned by contextual geographies of the Global South, Trócaire's constructions of poverty prioritised narratives that extended beyond deprivations and situated problems within specific contexts. Within such narratives Global South poverty was forwarded as a specific set of restrained capacities, thus avoiding dominant soft narratives that root causality to imaginaries of Global South helplessness and passivity. As mentioned above, Trócaire's narratives were far from an all-encompassing and situated accounts of poverty, yet the website demonstrated a willingness to engage their audience with a more contextual and multi-dimensional understanding of poverty. This was in direct comparison to the constructions prioritised by Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern. Hence, the analysis outlined here found that when narratives of poverty were framed by a contextual imaginary of the Global

South, a more nuanced and multi-dimensional construction of poverty emerged for NGO audiences. However, as the next section will demonstrate prioritising such contextually nuanced constructions of poverty are far from straightforward for organisations.

6.4 Prioritising Poverty: The Ambiguous Role of Donation

The uncritical and decontextualised constructions of poverty within Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise, all reflect the literature regarding the relationship between public donation/support and NGOs promotion of soft public understandings. As Chapter 8 will highlight in more detail, the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise demonstrated a clear prioritisation for public engagement objectives pertaining to public support and donation within material. As a result, the uncritical and reductive constructions of poverty, suffering and crises were framed within these objectives; donation in the case of Concern and Pencils of Promise and public support for Acumen's model (see Chapter 8). Meanwhile, the instances of uncritical and reductive construction of poverty within Trócaire's website only occurred alongside donation pleas. As a result, the distinction between the websites with regards public support are tied to organisation

As noted in the literature review of this thesis, mediated NGO material has contributed to the dominance of soft public donor expectations, constructing and maintaining reductive ideas relating to what poverty looks like and who is worthy of intervention. Studies by Dogra (2014) and Chouliaraki (2013) for example have noted that NGO donation campaigns prioritise soft public engagement with distant suffering and Global south poverty. NGO donation campaigns place significant constraints on critical public engagement, as context and nuance is marginalised while causality is often reduced to a series of lacks (see Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). This is relevant to this research, as the production of soft constructions of poverty aligned with each of the organisation's prioritisation of discourses around public donation/support. Within NGO communication of aid and development, the avoidance of complex knowledge is linked to an NGO's presumption that it will be rejected by donor publics; it may pose what Britzman and Pitt (1996) refer to as difficult knowledge. Complex or critical narratives of poverty that encourage engagement beyond the dominant emotive and simplified narratives potentially pose difficult knowledge to publics. As the result, in the case study websites where organisations pursue public donation and/or support, the rejection of difficult knowledge is potentially detrimental to an organisation's legitimacy and legacy. The

constructions of poverty by Trócaire, Acumen and Pencils of Promise however extend existing discussions around NGOs dependency on uncritical and emotive understandings; providing important insights considerations around the opportunities and challenges posed by alternative public discourse.

First, Trócaire's website for example highlighted how the prioritisation of a contextually nuanced construction of poverty is far from straightforward for NGOs. Interestingly, despite prioritising a more complex narrative of poverty for their website visitors, the organisation demonstrated a clear reliance on the donation/soft narrative relationship, albeit to a far lesser degree than the other case studies. As mentioned above, Trócaire's website contained stereotypical representations of the Global South in material where donation priorities were clearly pursued in webpages. In these instances, soft constructions of poverty emerged similar to the other three case studies, framing Global South poverty as a lack of sufficient water, healthcare and food:

"€50 provides a sprinkler to a farm in a drought affected area"

"€25 provides seeds for a family to plant"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Donate

"A gift of €10,800 could provide school lunches for 200 children for one year"

"€5 provides maize flower to feed 50 children for 1 day in Malawi"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Major Gifts

"€100 ensures a young mother can deliver her baby safely with the help of a midwife in Somalia"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Lenten Campaign

Here, decontextualised representations of the Global South contributed to soft uncritical narratives of issues like hunger, maternal healthcare, and sustainable farming. Crucially, webpages containing donation/support priorities within Trócaire's website were comparatively much lower than Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise (see Chapter 2). The majority of Trócaire's website material demonstrated a broader set of public engagement objectives ranging from education, awareness, and campaigning (see discussions in Chapter 8). In those instances, the organisation's nuanced framing of poverty emerged through the counter-geographical representations discussed above. Thus, Trócaire's promotion of counter-geographies of poverty emerged through the reduction of public donation and support priorities.

However, Trócaire's reduction of public donation priorities within the construction of poverty demonstrates a willingness on their part to engage their public with knowledge about poverty beyond the confines of garnering donations. Notably the production of contextually nuanced narratives poverty did not see Trócaire re-work an alternative donation discourse. Trócaire's soft construction of poverty within narratives of donation therefore seems to be reflective broader sectoral anxieties that inform NGOs' tendency to avoid difficult knowledge. Even with an apparent prioritisation for enhancing their audience's critical awareness with issues, the influence of the entrenched relationship between uncritical discourse and public donation was difficult to disrupt/avoid for Trócaire. Trócaire's website demonstrated that that the affective power of soft public donor-understandings can remain difficult to resist, even in the case of an organisation that demonstrates a propensity for disrupting dominant narratives within their public engagement strategy more broadly. Instead, the prioritisation of a contextually nuanced constructions of poverty was facilitated through Trócaire's expanded public engagement objectives. As opposed to any different financial capacities (see Chapter 2), it was Trócaire's willingness to reduce public donation priorities that enhanced their capacity to avoid their public discourse being appropriated by the production of soft constructions of Global South poverty.

Second, in regards the willingness and capacity to reduce the salience of dominant donation discourses, Pencils of Promise and Acumen's prioritisation of soft constructions of poverty was also interesting to note given their social entrepreneurship frameworks. As highlighted within the literature review, social entrepreneurship theory highlighted a possibility to reproduce conventional donor narratives through a propensity for local context (Seelos and Mair, 2015; Dess, 2012). Theorists such as Mair (2010), Santos (2012) and Martin and Novićević, 2010) all suggested that local agency and knowledge were key elements to social entrepreneurship's understandings of social problems. In the aid and development context, this highlighted the potential for disrupting dominant imaginaries of the Global South, and soft narratives of poverty and causality (see discussions of social entrepreneurship in Literature Review). However, the material prioritised through the websites of Pencils of Promise and Acumen did not fulfil this potential. Despite the value placed on local capacity and knowledge noted in social entrepreneurship literature, this did not manifest within the narratives of poverty produced by both social entrepreneurship case-studies for their public audience. Neither Pencils of Promise nor Acumen engaged with the complexity nor contexts of Global South poverty; instead both websites prioritised a soft narrative reflective of dominant mediated

public discourses. In the case of both organisations, the work carried out at grassroot-level enhancing local capacity did not contribute a construction of problems that was contextually nuanced or situated.

Similar to Concern and Trócaire, Pencils of Promise's constructions of poverty were linked to the prioritisation of donation (and fundraising) objectives within their website. Again, demonstrating the affective power of the donation/soft understandings relationship, Pencils of Promise avoided situating education issues within an engagement of potentially difficult knowledge of educational issues. Meanwhile, Acumen prioritised a soft framing of poverty that was exaggerated the role of income in eradicating poverty. In a somewhat re-working of the donation/soft understandings relationship, Acumen's priority for promoting their model of poverty eradication (based on enhancing income capacity) noted a similar avoidance of difficult and/or complex knowledge around the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. Thus, Acumen and Pencils of Promise's constructions of poverty demonstrated a key challenge in the context of producing critical and contextual public discourses; the theoretical capabilities of social entrepreneurships' advocacy for local context are redundant, when they are accompanied by the unwillingness to prioritise public objectives beyond donation and public support.

6.5 Concluding The Chapter

Analysing the construction of poverty prioritised by the four case study websites therefore highlighted two important insights for considering the potential for NGOs to produce critically engaged and contextually nuanced discourses for the public. First, all four case studies demonstrate the obstructive influence that dominant soft (donor) public understandings pose to the production of more contextually nuanced narratives of poverty and causality. For example, the dominance of soft constructions of poverty throughout the websites of Concern, Pencils of Promise and Acumen was underpinned by the prioritisation of public donation and public promotional objectives maintained within webpages of these three websites. While the only instances of uncritical and simplified constructions of poverty emerging within Trócaire's website, was alongside donation discourses. As a result, it was the marginalised prioritisation of donation priorities within Trócaire's website that contributed to the reduced influence that soft constructions had on its material overall. Secondly, the construction of poverty promoted throughout the websites of Acumen and Pencils of Promise challenged the theoretical possibilities highlighted within the social entrepreneurship literature. Despite the potential regarding social entrepreneurship's valuing of local context and capacity, both organisations

reproduced hegemonic imaginaries of the Global South and soft narratives of poverty. Instead both Acumen and Pencils of Promise retreated to the soft understandings of Global South poverty that dominate Global North publics. The dominance of these constructions within both websites were underpinned by a clear prioritisation of donation (on the part of Pencils of Promise) and organisational promotion (in the case of Acumen). Thus, in the context of considering the challenges and opportunities for NGOs' production of alternative public discourse, the marginalisation of donation within the material of Trócaire's website considerably reduced the dominance of soft narratives in the production of knowledge for the public.

7. CONSTRUCTING AID AND DEVELOPMENT IMAGINARIES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the second research objective of this thesis, analysing the construction of aid and development produced by the case study websites, and the interventionist discourse prioritised:

> *To examine the key discourses of aid and development interventions that emerge from each case study website. Here the research pays particular attention to the interventions prioritised by each organisation, considering how each website mediates narratives of NGO work.*

The previous chapter demonstrated that the production of knowledge about Global South poverty emerged along two broad trends. Reductive and uncritical (soft) constructions of poverty were prioritised within the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern for example. These narratives were underpinned by a decontextualised geographical representation of Global South people and place as helpless and dependant on intervention. Trócaire's website on the other hand *prioritised* a more nuanced construction of poverty, this was informed by the production of contextual geographical representations of the Global South. This chapter considers the construction of aid and development examining first the representation of aid and development through the performance of geographical knowledge. Secondly, the chapter considers how each website contributes to a public imaginary of the organisations' work, considering the gap in understandings that each website creates between their interventionary policy and the expectations they promote for their public audiences. Finally, the chapter identifies the role that public accountability priorities play in how each case study NGO constructed aid and development. In doing so, this chapter examines key discourses of aid and development promoted within the websites, unpacking clear organisational priorities that pose the greatest challenge to a construction of a counter-geography of aid and development work representations.

7.2 REPRESENTING AID AND DEVELOPMENT WORK

Extending discussion relating to the constructions of poverty outlined in the previous chapter, the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise prioritise depictions of aid and

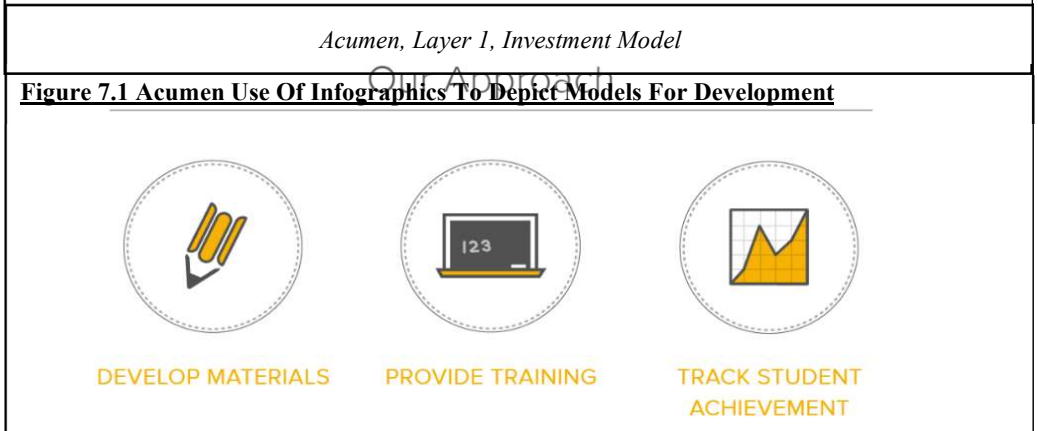
development work that maintained the performance of abstract geographical knowledge. Through the use of infographics, post-intervention success narratives, and the strategic use of organisational branding, representations of aid and development marginalised the corporeality and context of case study NGO interventions. Trócaire's website also demonstrated instances of such representations, however the prioritisation of contextual geographical knowledge through the representation of aid and development was evident in the case of this organisation.

7.2.1 The Role of Infographics in Mediating NGO Work

The use of infographics to describe and visualise aid and development work was frequently utilised within the websites of Pencils of Promise and Acumen. On both these websites in particular, infographics consistently dominated webpages explaining specific programmes (in the case of Pencils of Promise) or interventionary practice (in the case of Acumen). As noted in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 below, complex processes of programme delivery and monitoring are reduced to concise depictions through the use of infographics.

Acumen, Layer 1, Investment Model

Figure 7.1 Acumen Use Of Infographics To Depict Models For Development



Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Teacher Support

Figure 7.2 Pencils Of Promise's Use Of Infographics To Depict Models For Development

These examples show infographics regarding Pencils of Promise's '*Teacher Support'* programmes and Acumen's '*Patient Capital*' investment approach. In both cases, processes of aid and development work are condensed through diagrams. Here, the large network of actors involved in operationalising *'Patient Capital'* (see section 7.3) are rendered invisible within the diagram. While the important role of community leaders and local staff in running Pencils of Promise's teacher support programmes is dismissed negated within the infographic above. While Acumen provided more information within their diagrams in comparison to Pencils of Promise; the reliance on these depictions to explain intricate processes had consequences for contextual and more nuanced understandings of the work both organisations do. Similar to Gregory's (2010; 2005) work on the utilisation of digital mapping to abstract the geographies of the battlefield, the use of infographics abstract and condense the geographies of each organisations' interventions. Instead, information regarding the provision of an investment or the provision of teacher training is streamlined for the websites' visitor. Thus, by virtue of their lack of context and corporeality, the websites' use of infographics presented an ambiguous construction of how the case study organisations work.

In both websites, the consistent and frequent use of infographics to represent aid and development work present an extremely reductive representation of people and place. The programmes are removed from any geographical or organisational context, negating the network of actors and structures that contribute to the delivery and management of such programmes. This is deeply problematic as the success and sustainability of NGO interventions at grassroot level are shaped by a series of complex network of capacities; individual benefactors, their communities, and the broader societal structures will ultimately impact the success of a programme (see Polman, 2010; Bebbington, 2004; Escobar, 1995). Moreover, these capacities are themselves determined by societal political and economic relations, along with the physical and infrastructural environment within any given target-region. In removing programmes like '*Teacher Support*' and '*Patient Capital*' from such context and corporeality, these infographics negate understandings of the relations and structures that will impact the success and sustainability of interventions. Instead, these infographics promote aid and development work as an efficient straightforward process, with a clear trajectory and successful end point i.e. the delivery of equipment or investment. In this way, the infographics fulfilled an affective but deeply problematic demonstration of organisational efficiency and success.

7.2.2 POST-INTERVENTION SUCCESS STORIES

Within the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise, and Concern, the discourse of aid and development work were also frequently predicated on a demonstration of post-intervention success. In these case studies in particular, visual representations of post-intervention and frequent references to successful programmes all contributed to an ambiguous discourse of aid and development work. Discourses of post-intervention success emerged consistently through the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern's in three ways. First, post-intervention narratives emerged through all four websites highlighting the impact of completed programmes, and the scale of transformation delivered by the organisations' efforts. Such narratives were depicted through the presentation of statistics (and/or statistical diagrams) that referred to the successful completion of interventions:

""In 2012, we responded to 43 emergencies across 20 countries, directly reaching close to three million people"

"So far more than 95% of the young women who have completed the 'Skilz' course have received HIV counselling and testing"

Concern, Layer 2, Malawi

"*In 2015 we reached 197, 000 people with support"*

Concern, Layer 2, Syria

"In 2015, we positively impacted the lives of 22.5 million people"

Concern, Layer 3, Funding Sources

"*523 Teachers Supported!"*

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, About Us

"4,123 scholarships distributed"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Scholarships

"*33, 883 students served by our schools"*

"300,000 + lives impacted by our programmes"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, What We Have Done

"88 communities and 61, 974 people impacted"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Laos

"PoP 5th and 6th grade students see 100% greater improvement than their peer in reading indicators"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 3, Annual Report

"Our investments have impacted the lives of over 100 million lives"

Acumen, Layer 1, Ideas

"23 million lives impacted, 9,500 jobs created and supported, $31.9 million invested in breakthrough innovations"

Acumen, Layer 1, India

"3 million lives impacted, 31, 500 jobs created and supported"

Acumen, Layer 2, Agriculture

In regards the discourse of aid and development work, these narratives framed intervention through a series of completed tangible objectives or indeed references to scale of impact i.e. the number of people impacted by programmes or the investments made. Without any other contextualising information, within these instances, aid and development work was removed from any rationale; problems being addressed are not explained, nor are the measures that were taken to address them. For example, such references did not rationalise how/if Pencils of Promise's school buildings have maintained the enrolment and attendance of 33, 883 students in Ghana, nor how sustainable has progress been after the creation of jobs from Acumen's investments. The discourse of aid and development promoted through the use of these statistics prioritised a demonstration of success to donors. Subsequently, the website visitor is not engaged with any contextualised rationale for such programmes, or an explanation of what the delivery of these programmes look like. The agency of both practitioners and benefitting communities is also negated within such narratives. Practitioners were also rendered invisible within such narratives, characterised only by the efficient and ambigious delivery of resources such as 'capital investment', 'programmes', and 'support'. Meanwhile, benefactors were only characterised by their dependance on such resources, and their inability to obtain such services prior to intervention. Thus, these narratives of post-intervention appropriated the situated experiences of aid and development programmes, in favour for a more salient demonstration of an organisation's success and efficiency.

Second, all four case study websites presented post-intervention imagery that depicted the use/delivery of resources as a means to demonstrate the successful completion of programmes. Such

Trocaire, Layer 3, Solar Lamp

Layer 2 Guatemala

imagery depicted Global South benefactors participating in programmes or benefitting from gaining a resource (see Figure 7.3).

Acumen, Layer 1, Investments

Concern. Laver 1. Health

Concern, Layer 2, Open Information Approach

Trócaire, Layer 1, Where We Work

Acumen, Layer 2, Investment List

Acumen, Layer 2, Wasi Organics

Figure 7.3 Post-Intervention Imagery

Within aid and development communication more broadly, post-intervention imagery such as this have been subject to critique however; the positioning of Global South actors as grateful recipient perpetuates unequal global power dynamics (Dogra, 2014; Wells, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2010). The images above of Global South 'Others' using technology, partaking in classes, and benefiting from basic needs such as water and nutrition packs may well all challenge imaginaries of Global South passiveness. However, critics (Power, 2019; Dogra, 2014, Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006) suggest that such representations only extend ideas of Global South dependency; particularly where the imagery negates the identity, context and voice of the benefactor as was the case with the examples above. In addition to negating/appropriating the agency and identities of Global South participants within programmes, this imagery also abstracted the processes of delivering such resources. Similar to post-intervention narratives of success, the rationale for the delivery of such resources was dismissed; subsumed by the more salient narrative arc pertaining to the organisation's success. The process of NGO work was once again condensed to its successful endpoint, negating the planning, delivery and management involved such programmes.

Related to post-intervention imagery was the use of branding/logo(s) by Concern and Pencils of Promise to signal a successful intervention. Throughout imagery in both of these websites, the organisations' logo was an ever-present representation of the organisations' successful intervention. As noted in the examples below (see Figure 7.4), the use of the organisation's branding within post-intervention narratives served as a signifier, not only of the practitioner's presence, but of a successfully completed project. Like the use of infographics however, the use of logos to depict the delivery of a programme negated any engagement with context. The imagery of students utilising Pencils of Promise-branded equipment or the focus on Concern's signage at programme sites for example dismissed any acknowledgement or explanation of the agency of the actors involved. As a result, given the lack of agency and context alongside these narratives, the use of logo and post-intervention imagery saw the case study organisations in effect claim complete responsibility for the success and transformation depicted.

Concern, Layer 3, Conservation Agriculture in Malawi (00.01.22)

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, What We've Done

Concern, Layer 3, Washed Away: Floods in Southern Africa (00.01.48)

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, How Will You Build The Next One (00.01.20)

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, How Will You Build the Next (00.01.47)

Figure 7.4 Organisational Branding and Logos

Third, both Concern and Acumen presented testimonials regarding the success and efficiency of their interventions. In the case of Acumen's website, the organisation itself introduced testimonies of their investee companies:

"Wasi Organics addresses key drivers of rural poverty by improving farmers productivity and providing access to end markets"

"Wasi Organics plans to double the income of 800 smallholder farmers in the next two years"

Acumen, Layer 2, Wasi Organics

"Acumen invested in Mekele Farms to fund its expansion plan"

Acumen Layer 2, Mekele Farms

"SiembraViva works using technology and innovative logistics to increase farmers' production"

"Through its innovative platform the company eliminates the inefficiency in the supply chain as well as the prohibitive costs of transporting produce"

Acumen, Layer 2, SiembraViva

These testimonials provided an account of the investee companies through a description of the service or product they provide (i.e. Wasi Organics provide access to markets, SiembraViva provides framers with logistical services and technological access to markets). Moreover, these testimonials prioritised a narrative of impact and innovation, alongside information regarding the scale of Acumen's investment (enhancing 800 smallholder farmers' income, for example). For the majority of investee companies, these introductions served as the only engagement provided by the websites with the companies; yet the voice and agency of these companies, their customers or partner-investors are dismissed. Similar, to the use of logos or post-intervention imagery, this drew a clear connection between Acumen's investment and the innovation and impact of the investee company. Acumen uses the innovation and impact of the investee companies as a demonstration of their own success, without unpacking the processes that deliver such results and the role that Acumen has.

Unlike Acumen, testimonials within Concern's website were oriented in the perspective (and words) of programme participants. Here, programme benefactors were provided a space to speak about their experiences of taking part (and benefitting from) Concern's programmes. Notably, these narratives were consistently framed through a focus on Concern's transformative role and/or the helplessness of the situation prior to Concern's intervention:

"Previously, I used to harvest one bag of soy beans or less and four bags of groundnuts- but now I load up to six ox-carts full of harvests! I now realise seven bags of soya which was not the case before"

Dorice Malinga, Farmer

Concern, Layer 3, Conservation Farming Video (00.02.07)

"I have lived here for three years and I've never seen the water come in like this. It took all the canvass- I've never seen anything like it" (00.01.17) Nina Gabriella

"All of my things were lost- not one thing was recovered" (00.01.08) Leno Alberto

Concern, Layer 3, Washed Away, Floods in Southern Africa Video

Concern's use of testimonies demarcate clearly between a lack of agency prior to Concern's intervention, and the gaining of a transformative resource/knowledge as a direct result of their participation in a programme. For example, within Dorice's testimonial she identifies her own behaviour/actions as the problem, and a transformative change is directly linked to her participation in a Concern agricultural programme. While Nina and Leno both spoke about the scale of the devastation left by the flooding in southern Africa. Notably, when the narratives moved to detail around rationalising and explaining the delivery of programmes, accounts were subsumed by 'expert' voices of Concern practitioners and government/partner-NGO agents:

"CA works, it works for women, it works for the poor, it works for Malawi; It's a green technology that can ensure the farmer increases her or his returns in a sustainable way" - Stewart Gee, Programme Coordinator (00.05.35)

Concern, Layer 3, Conservation Agriculture in Malawi Video

"We are providing shelter kits, We are providing hygiene kits - and we are also providing a family kit because they have lost everything" - Gilbeiro Onanade, Emergency Coordinator (00.01.55)

Concern, Layer 3, Washed Away, Floods in Southern Africa Video

Thus, Global South testimonials within Concern and Acumen only served as a demonstration of successful intervention, as opposed to a situated account of participating in a Concern programme. Unlike Maggie O'Kane's counter-narratives which were rooted in a willingness to foreground situated knowledges (Theoretical Framework, section 4.2.2), these testimonials were again appropriated by a demonstration of successful intervention.

Overall, these representations of aid and development work reflect the decontextualised and hegemonic underpinning the constructions of poverty prioritised in the websites of Acumen,

Concern and Pencils of Promise (see Chapter 6). These representations dismissed the geographies of NGO work, as context and corporeality of aid and development was marginalised or negated completely. Infographics and discourses of post-intervention success contributed to public imaginaries of interventions that negated the social, economic and physical contexts of these interventions. Moreover, the lived experiences of both those participating in programmes and those delivering the projects were also dismissed. As a result, the range of processes and actors relating to planning, delivery and monitoring the work of these organisations were marginalised; the different structures and relations that programmes operate within and between were rendered invisible to the knowledge promoted by the websites. As a result, the lack of context and corporeality only served to reproduce dominant hegemonic imaginaries of Global South dependency, helplessness and passiveness. In centralising the role of the NGO success, paternalistic attitudes underpinning dominant discourses of development are reinforced. Subsequently these discourses marginalise understandings of unequal power relations that contribute to global poverty; the websites' representations of NGO work depict Global South communities as dependent on the capacity and resources of Northern actors. Therefore, representations of aid and development prioritised within the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise's extended upon, as opposed to the challenged, the hegemonic imaginaries discussed in Chapter 6. As noted in the discussions above, discourses of successful and efficient interventions were clearly operationalised through these imaginaries of aid and development at the expense of explaining or rationalising programmes. Thus, the production of hegemonic imaginaries of aid and development by Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise served as a means to promote public accountability and organisational legitimacy.

7.2.3 Trócaire's Representation of Aid and Development

In contrast, depictions of aid and development prioritised by Trócaire largely extended a representation of context and corporeality. Building on the more nuanced construction of poverty, Trócaire's description of their work emerged as a set of problems specific to communities within the regions being discussed:

> *"Climate change in one of the main challenges in Ethiopia as millions of large-scale farmers rely on subsistence agriculture, and pastoralists rely on animals and natural grazing for a living […] This programme works to increase and diversify income, create sustainable access to natural resources and improve production and productivity""*
>
> Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

"Trócaire is supporting a number of local radio stations which produce weekly radio programmes in English, Arabic and a variety of local languages, focusing an explaining the situation [of the conflict], the peace process and various governance structures and processes to communities who otherwise do not have access to this information"

Trócaire, Layer 3, South Sudan

"Trócaire is responding to the urgent needs of refugees arriving in Europe and has supported vital aid to refugees in Serbia, Greece, Croatia and Macedonia. Trócaire has also been consistently calling for greater diplomatic engagement to find a political solution to the crisis and commitments on humanitarian aid and refugee resettlement to be honoured"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

Through a regional framing of issues, Trócaire consequently described programmes grounded in specific regions. The provision of farming support in Ethiopia was rationalised within Ethiopia's reliance on subsistence and pastoral farming, for example. Similarly, the conflict resolution programme involving the production of radio shows was explained in terms of a specific contextual problem; the lack of access to knowledge for communities at the centre of the conflict. While the implementation of their refugee programme was rationalised in terms of shortfalls within the political and diplomatic structures of the country. By virtue of these more contextually nuanced narratives, Trócaire's website provided a representation of their work that challenged the ambiguous standardised construction of aid and development. Narratives promoted by Trócaire framed interventions through a range of different causal elements that require addressing.

Representations produced by Trócaire about their programmes also highlighted the corporeality of aid and development work. This was particularly evident in video content where space was provided for both programme participants and practitioners to share their experience of programmes. It was evident throughout the website that these narratives centred on participants' experiences of specific problems and the process undertaken to overcoming them. Notably, these experiences remained in the words of those who were part of the programme including participants, practitioners, local government partners:

"It has actually empowered communities to bring issues to government in order to influence policies that have a bearing of the provision of quality education"

Closer To People, Layer 3, 00.01. 53

"MHN received some funding from Trócaire, the funds were used to give to members to train the people of this community know their rights and responsibilities, so they said the centre was closed due to inadequate health workers and because the people are aware of their rights and responsibilities they requested for the health centre to be reopened"

Closer, To People, Layer 3, 00.06.59

"Some girls don't come to school because they can't afford school fees, uniform and books. I urge them to come because they can get help!"

Somalia Education Programme, Layer 1, 00.02.13

Such accounts were examples of an insistence on corporeality that emerged through Trócaire's testimonials; narratives were situated within the sites where programmes were delivered and were voiced by those who were involved. A key distinction noted between these testimonials and those within Concern's website, was how narratives remained in the words of the Global South local. Moreover, discourses around accountability and success were comparatively marginalised within the testimonials in Trócaire's website. This is not to say they did not act as demonstrations of successful interventions for the organisations; references to the role of Trócaire's successful completion were comparatively minimal (if not altogether absent), however. This signalled a willingness to avoid subsuming narratives of aid and development with an agenda of accountability priorities.

Related to Trócaire's situated testimonials, post-intervention success stories were also found in Trócaire's website. Narratives and imagery pertaining to the successful provision of resources was evident throughout Trócaire's website, these narratives often centred around the capacity of the benefactor to use the goods or services to improve their own lives.

"[…the provision of seeds…] will provide a family with food and a source of income from the crops the grow"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Donate

"Through our programmes we, provide information about government processes in Malawi and give communities the tools to better monitor and critique these processes"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Malawi

"In Honduras, communities succeeded in having two local authorities adopt a declaration to keep their municipalities mining free to protect their land"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Humanitarian Response

"We are working with women and men to eliminate inequalities that keep women poor and marginalised"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Trócaire's Work

"This programme aims to enhance the capacity of Ethiopian men and women, especially the poor and marginalised to effectively engage with and influence decision-making processes that effect their lives"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

"We are currently providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of displaced people […] we support these communities with access to water, improved hygiene and sanitation facilities and awareness raising, all with the aim to reduce disease and improve quality of life"

Trócaire, Layer 3, South Sudan

These Trócaire's post-intervention narratives remain a perpetuation of Global South dependency in that the community relies on the intervention, however the transformative agency of the practitioner is reduced. Within Trócaire's framing of post-intervention success stories, the provision of resources enhances the capacity of the benefactor to transform their own experiences. For example, the civil society programmes in Malawi and Ethiopia were described through the community's enhanced capacity to demand better governance practices from their representatives. Land rights interventions in Honduras were described through referencing the community's success in lobbying for better policies. This is contrast to the narratives of post-intervention success promoted by the other three case studies; the salience of the practitioner/expert is minimal in Trócaire's demonstration of success.

However, the salience of these narratives and the specific messages that they occurred alongside is important to consider; narratives of post-intervention success appeared alongside two different types of discourse in Trócaire's website. In some instances, these narratives appeared as part of webpages that were focused on specific programmes and countries. Here, success stories acted as relatively small components within a broader contextualised representation of aid and development. Secondly, these success narratives appeared within donation pages, where they were a more salient component of the overall discourse engaging donors. While these donation pages were given relatively low priority within the overall website, they did contribute to a reductive public donor imaginary of aid and development work. As a result, Trócaire's narratives post-intervention success reflect a distinction within their website more broadly. Uncritical imaginaries of aid and development emerged alongside public engagement objectives pertaining to donor and donor accountability; the prioritisation

of contextual geographies of aid and development emerged as a result of Trócaire's reduced public donation/accountability priorities in their website.

Overall however, within Trócaire's website the prioritised representations of aid and development promoted a corporeality and nuance of their work. In contrast to Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise, the representations prioritised by Trócaire demonstrated a sensitivity to context; programmes were rationalised and explained based on specific communities or regions. The construction of aid and development forwarded in Trócaire's website therefore continued to diverge from other three case studies in terms of how they constructed a 'way of seeing/knowing' aid and development.

7.3 Shaping Public Imaginaries of Aid and Development

Examining how the imaginaries of aid and development prioritised by the case study websites is important for this research, as it is these imaginaries that contribute to donor expectations of NGO work at grassroot level. The literature on NGO mediated campaigns has noted how imaginaries of aid and development work plays a fundamental role in shaping public support (Power, 2018; Dogra, 2014); interventionist narratives inform public expectations of NGO work and encourage support and/or donation (Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Baillie-Smith, 2013). The narratives produced by NGOs therefore inform public imaginaries of NGO work; the type of work that is considered worthwhile by donors and the role that the NGO should play. All four case study websites constructed public imaginaries that marginalised the complexity and everyday reality of aid and development work. However, the gap of understanding between public expectations and the grassroots work undertaken by the organisations differed between the case studies.

Supported by the decontextualised and ambiguous representation of people and places, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all prioritised interventionist narratives that framed aid and development work as a provision of goods and services in reaction to deficiencies. The soft constructions of poverty prioritised in all three case studies consequently endorsed a reductive construction of aid and development within their websites also. Here, reductive narratives of poverty set the frame for the production of interventions; framing aid and development work. Acumen, Pencils of Promise, and Concern therefore prioritised an imaginary of their work that framed aid and development as a process based on a problem/solution binary:

"Many farmers in rural Ethiopia are over-reliant on a single crop. To combat this problem, Concern introduced Idbre Seid and his community to the potato crop and his community to the potato crop"

Concern, Layer 1, Hunger

"The overall goal of our health programme is to improve the health of the world's poorest people and ensure that they have access to food"

Concern, Layer 1, Health

"Concern is currently implementing a cash transfer response which aims […] to help people affected by the crisis to buy food and other basic needs"

Concern, Layer 2, Malawi

"We are providing food baskets and food vouchers to vulnerable families"

Concern, Layer 2, Syria

"Concern started promoting conservation agriculture in Zimbabwe in 2004 as a food distribution and relief programme"

Concern, Layer 3, Conservation Farming

"From micro-drip irrigation systems to drought-resistant hybrid seeds, there are hundreds of social entrepreneurships providing innovations that help farmers increase the yield and crops"

Acumen, Layer 1, Growing Prosperity

"From banks in rural Pakistan supporting low-income farmers to ambulances in Mumbai with a mandate to 'serve all' regardless of income, our companies are solving some of the world's toughest social problems"

Acumen, Layer 1, Investments

"*Acumen makes investment that generate both social and financial returns*"

Acumen, Layer 1, Investment Model

"When farmers grow more food and earn more income, they are better able to provide for their families, send their children to school and invest in improving their farms"

Acumen, Layer 1, Growing Prosperity

"Improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers"

"*Our investments better the lives of the poor and low income families by improving smallholder famers' agricultural inputs and markets for the sale of their goods*"

Acumen, Layer 2, Agriculture

"Teachers that receive PoP support see 3x higher test scores amongst their students"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Teacher Support

"Thus far every school we've opened is fully operational and educating students"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, About Us

"PoP 1st and 2nd grade students in Ghana see 23% greater improvement than their peers in pre-reading indicators"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 3, Annual Report

In these narratives deficiencies are addressed and replenished along a straightforward trajectory; training and the provision of technology improves problems of education quality, improved farming technology addresses problems of poor yields and farmers' low income, and the provision of cash transfers and food solves problems of food insecurity. In the websites of Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise, aid and development was therefore equated to providing basic needs, and resources like equipment, expert knowledge or capital investment, in order to solve issues. The public imaginaries of aid and development work prioritised by these three case studies remove interventions from the relations and structures that contribute to problems of inequality. The case studies' prioritisation of uncritical hegemonic imaginaries therefore contributed to reductive understandings of NGO work, promoting instead narratives of successful reactive solutions. As a result, the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise can be said to have prioritised 'soft' (Andreotti, 2006) public imaginaries of aid and development: reductive and over-simplified (soft) understandings of interventions are underpinned by de-contextualised and de-historicised imaginings of the Global South.

Consequently, these soft imaginaries of aid and development contributed restrictive public understandings and expectations of the organisations' grassroot programmes. In Concern's website for example, one of the most frequent themes was Concern's work in contexts of food security and famine relief. Here, soft construction of issues such as malnutrition, starvation and food insecurity (see Chapter 6) informed an equally reductive soft public imaginary of interventions. The provision of food and agricultural expertise were forwarded as solutions to such problems, this promoted public expectations of NGO work along a problem/solution framing. As a result, Concern promote a reactionary narrative of their work, whereby points of complete deprivation mark the rationale or justification for Concern's response. Food aid and interventions, starvation and malnutrition are manifestations of preceding stages however, the capacities within a community to access food or sustain nutrition levels have continued to erode over a period of time (Howe, 2018). Thus, the imaginary promoted by Concern is challenging

as it negates any critical public understandings with the merits of preventative work, or the multidimensional nature of interventions related to food insecurity and famine.

Moreover, the public imaginary promoted within Concern's website does not represent the nuance and reality of Concern's work at grassroots. In terms of Concern's food interventionary policies the organisation is a leading actor in advocating for a multidimensional and preventative approach to food insecurity. Their '*Hunger and Conflict*' policy for example highlights an approach that looks to unpack the relationship between food insecurity and conflict within specific contexts (Conflict & Hunger Report, 2018). The policy targets strengthening people's resilience to withstand food shortages when conflict exacerbates vulnerabilities in resources and services (Conflict & Hunger, 2018). Thus, while Concern's website promotes a public imaginary of cash transfers and agricultural training, these are component of a multidimensional and contextually nuanced framework for intervention at grassroots. For example, in Afghanistan cash transfers are part of Concern's "*two-pronged approach*" to food intervention where violence and conflict makes for a challenging and fluid context (Conflict & Hunger Report, 2018 p.17). This programme in Afghanistan utilises cash transfers through cash-for-work activities so as to generate household incomes to increase farmers' capacity to withstand sudden shocks to their food-supply. A second element to such a policy has provided training in order to rehabilitate the land and re-stabilise agricultural production.

Similarly, outside the context of conflict, Concern's food security policy targets resilience-building; programmes look to reduce the impact that environmental, economic and/or political shocks have on communities' access to food. For example, in Somalia Concern's *'Building Resilient Communities'* programme, targeted the capacity of communities to withstand the impact of 2016 drought and local conflict. Here Concern tackle resilience-building and food relief through a mix of long-term development activities, early-warning actions to reduce vulnerabilities, and emergency interventions when needed (Tackling Food Crisis in Somalia, 2016). Moreover, in the context of this research and counter-geographies, Concern specifically links the success of their policies to situated knowledge; the experiences and knowledge that both practitioners and communities have built up over the time the project has informed the sustainability of the programme. Finally, Concern's (2014-2018) strategy for addressing the relationship between income, markets and food security also targeted a multidimensional intervention. Here, the policy for addressing food insecurity targeted a range of interlinked programme goals; these include conservation agriculture, increasing individual economic

productivity, enhancing communities' reliance to under-nutrition, addressing urban livelihoods and promoting social protection (Food, Income and Market Strategy, 2014-2018).

Concern's policies for food intervention therefore demonstrate a stark demarcation between the practitioner's focus and the imaginary produced for the public. In deep contrast to their policies at grassroots, the imaginary prioritised by Concern around their food intervention work contributed to a hegemonic and one-dimensional understanding. The narratives promoted for the website's visitors contributed to a broader imaginary that places significant constraints on how the public engage with global food insecurity issues and crises. For example, one of the greatest impediments to food crises (deprivation crises in general) is the propensity to wait until the point of crisis is declared in order for public and political response to mobilise (Slota, 2018; Wall, 2017). This tendency reduces the timeline that a response is on in the consciousness of international donors (public and institutional), thereby greatly inhibiting the capacities of actors (including NGO practitioners, internal state actors and impacted communities) to respond at stages preceding the crisis (see Hillbruner and Moloney, 2012). As a result, Concern's website was prioritising the short-sighted imaginaries of aid and development work that ultimately reinforce troubling donor expectations on their work, and ultimately will constrain their capacities at grassroot level.

Similarly, Acumen contributed soft public imaginaries of aid and development that constructed uncritical and reductive understanding of how their approaches operationalise, either throughout their investee companies or within their target communities. Narratives of Acumen's investment approach, and the services provided by their investee companies, forwards and increased income-capacity as the solution to all other problems of inequality:

"Our companies provide improved hybrid seed varieties, give smallholder farmers access to financing and to mobile technology to ensure farmers earn more from what they are producing"

Acumen, Layer 1, Investment Model

"When farmers grow more food and earn more income, they are better able to provide for their families, send their children to school and invest in their farms""

Acumen, Layer 2, Agriculture

"We invest in companies whose products both increase farmers' productivity and allow farmers to earn more from what they are producing"

Acumen, Layer 3, Why Agriculture

Here, Acumen's investments are justified and explained in relation to their significance to low income communities. This provides an emotive framing for Acumen's work; income enhancement provides a simple and tangible solution to poverty eradication; an enhanced income and a framer's ability to provide opportunities to their families and increase their yields. However, the public understandings within Acumen's website promotes an uncritical and reductive imaginary of their interventions. These imaginaries promoted the provision of income and investment as solutions to such problems, thus extending a soft reactionary imaginary of Acumen's process. The public imaginary promoted by Acumen's website negates the intricacies of Acumen's process. The network of actors involved in transforming Acumen's investment into a product or service is dismissed. In addition to this, the work of Acumen's investee companies and/or the input from co-financing partners are all marginalised within the imaginary of Acumen's interventions that they prioritised throughout the website.

For example, as an investor and often a co-investor, Acumen's interventionary role is predominantly to facilitate a company's access to capital and expertise. After this investment, Acumen continues to monitor the impact that their investee companies make on customers lives, using the information to increase the effectiveness of their investments and improving the merit of their approach within the development sector more broadly. Despite the reactionary imaginary promoted in their website (i.e. investment equates to a farmer's increased income), the stages subsequent to the investment remain largely out of Acumen's role; the creation of a product/service, its distribution, the purchase and the utilisation of the product in community life is outside the realm of Acumen's policy. Low-income customers are in effect third-party actors within the process of Acumen's investment.

Acumen's investment policies actually reflect a wide range of different supports for the companies, in fact Acumen's investment often involves being one component of a broader framework of support for an investee. More often than not, Acumen will act as co-investor alongside other foundations and/or companies to address problems/shortfalls in specific part of the company's product delivery. For example, customers are often hesitant to take up new products, especially when they involve changing agricultural practices of which they depend so heavily on. The performance of Acumen's investment in companies' products are often dependent upon funding from other actors to increase would-be customers awareness of the product, teaching them how to use the products and demonstrating the benefits they will have on their lives (Koh, Karamchandi and Katz, 2012). In addition, Acumen's investments may not always be in terms of developing a product or services, for example. Investment will often take

the form of bridge funding that supports a company when it experiences a problem in cash-flow (Koh, Karamchandi and Katz, 2012). Often, Acumen will often work with companies to provide them with financial support that helps them raise further capital from other investors. Aside from financial support, Acumen's fellowship ('*Acumen Fellows*', see Chapter 8) programme sees fellows placed with companies who can support the companies with technical expertise in sales and distribution activities. Acumen's policy includes supports companies in building networks with other relevant actors who can support the companies' supply chains and/or expansion efforts (Acumen Energy Impact Report, 2017).

Thus, Acumen's investment policy is a much more multidimensional and intricate model than the reactive public imaginary promoted on its website; the nature of the investment is largely informed by the needs of each company and the other investors or support networks involved. Imaginaries prioritised within the websites that promoted a reactionary narrative of investment/solution, negate an engagement with such context and complexity. Acumen's investment is ultimately an element within a broader process of the investee companies' product/service. However, the experiences of the investee companies and the customers within such processes are marginalised with the imaginaries of Acumen's work. As a result, this promotes an extremely narrow public understanding of interventions and their impact. The imaginary prioritised by Acumen, promotes Global South communities dependent upon Acumen's investment. This easily consumable narrative while problematic, is perhaps unsurprising given the unconventionality of Acumen's approach and their role in the entire process. The public are not encouraged to critically reflect on the investment approach itself, nor situate it within the surrounding geopolitical relationships that ultimately impact income capacities and investment opportunities in the Global South.

Like Acumen and Concern, soft imaginaries of Pencils of Promise's work were also rooted in their uncritical and hegemonic construction poverty; a lack of schooling facilities and low qualities in education delivery were determined as key obstacles to having a healthy and prosperous future (see Chapter 6).

"We're changing the way teachers are trained and supporter to ensure that students are learning"

"We're providing secondary school scholarships to equip students with the resources they need to attend a full year of school"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Destination of Your Dollars

"*We provide supplemental programming to provide quality learning!"*

Pencils of Promise, Layer 3, Annual Report

"One e-reader provides a student with 100 books in both English and the local language"

"A mobile learning kit contains books, phonics games and creative educational tools for teachers"

"Through workshops and coaching we equip teachers with innovative teaching methodologies"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 3, Innovation

Here, public expectations are reduced to a set of short-term reactionary objectives; improving access and quality of education were constructed as process of addressing and replenishing a lack in facilities, training and capacities. However, researchers have been deeply critical of such reductive public imaginaries, and their impact within the context of international response (Bircher and Michaelowa, 2016; Christensen, Homer and Nielson, 2011; Sen, 1999). For example, over the past two decades, donor preference (both public and institutional) within educational aid has been found to have increasingly skewed and undermined progress across education systems in the Global South. An imbalance in the prioritisation of aid targeting the provision of facilities at primary level has impacted negatively not just at secondary and tertiary levels, but on educational systems as a whole (see Bircher and Michaelowa, 2016). Institutional reforms within education systems at national level have acquired far less attention from international donors, despite widescale agreement over the importance a politico-economic context has to the success of education aid (Bircher and Michaelowa, 2016; see also Christensen, Homer and Nielson, 2011). Relatedly, the research has also shown that education aid effectiveness is simultaneously impacted by key socio-economic and cultural factors ranging from a student's family socio-economic status, to discriminatory societal norms, to broader economic and/or political instability. These scalar dimensions are important to an understanding of what interventions like Pencils of Promise's programmes should target, and how their success and impact should be measured. Instead, in negating these dimensions the imaginary prioritised by Pencils of Promise contributes to the problematic donor expectations that continues a problematic influence on educational aid more broadly.

Moreover, the public imaginary prioritised by Pencils of Promise was found to negate key interventionary principles of the organisation. While the imaginaries do not engage with the context and situatedness of interventions, there is clear evidence of an advocacy for context-specificity within Pencils of Promise's interventionary policies. While the provision of

education is an extremely important element of poverty eradication, Pencils of Promise's prioritised imaginary conceptualised a narrow understanding of poverty that removed education provision from all other non-educational (but extremely relevant) dimensions. Within Pencils of Promise's policy for education delivery however, the provision of training, schools and equipment is incorporated within a broader programme of intervention within a community. Identifying communities and planning the provision of schools incorporates the capacities and agency of community leaders and local staff (Theory of Change, 2018). In addition, the schools built by Pencils of Promise are public schools, whereby Pencils of Promise collaborate with local state actors in order to identify the most suitable operational practices for schools and staff, while also ensuring national education standards. Meanwhile, school-builds involve a process of community ownership; 20% of resources or labour for school builds in order to forge a better link between the community and the school (School Builds, 2019). Finally, community members also participate in the organisation's *WASH* programmes, as this has been found to improve the chances of sanitation and hygiene practices being adopted by the students and their families (School Builds, 2019).

Pencils of Promise's interventions also target a range of interrelated programmatic goals, despite the one-dimensional problem/solution imaginary prioritised within their website. A school build for example, includes the building or improvement of education facilities, while enhancing teaching and learning capacities within that school. It was also noted, that while their narrative of interventions negates any real engagement with existing educational infrastructure or governance, it is Pencils of Promise's policy to target partnerships at both local and national government levels from the start of the school build. It is thought that such partnerships can contribute to sustainability of their education outcomes. As a result, Pencils of Promise state in their policy documents that that they aim to encourage a broader systemic improvement through the incorporation of government actors within their programmes (Theory of Change, 2018). The public imaginary of aid and development prioritised by Pencils of Promise therefore does not reflect the value of context and local capacity demonstrated in their policy papers is entirely dismissed.

In regards Trócaire's website, the prioritisation of contextual geographies in the representation of their work contributed to the construction of a more nuanced imaginary of aid and development. The performance of nuanced constructions of Global South poverty promoted an imaginary of aid and development that identified a combination of various causal dimensions that required addressing. Moreover, the corporeality of aid and development programmes were

highlighted through situated representations, thus the imaginaries of Trócaire's programmes were often framed through the depictions of local capacity and knowledge of those participating in the programmes. As a result, imaginaries of Trócaire's work tend to reference a multi-scalar intervention; where programmes simultaneously tackle basic needs and structural injustices or inequalities. Often, imaginaries also highlight a highly politicalised and complex range of interventions including human rights' advocacy, the facilitation of legal aid for marginalised communities. Programmes referenced structural inequalities like better government transparency, increased female leadership within politics and the household, as well as politically sensitive work conflict resolution and peace-building. Here, Trócaire's more contextual public imaginary of aid and development emerges, posing a challenge to the abstracted geographies within dominant discourses of the NGO sector and media.

For example, the imaginary promoted by Trócaire situates much of their grassroots work within a network of partners; numerous references are made to local NGO-partners, government agencies and international NGOs throughout the website.

"In 2000 Trócaire opened a country office and began sharing that office and our programme work with CAFOD in 2005. In 2009 SCIAF also joined the group and now all three agencies work on joint programmes"

"The programme works with National civil society organisations, NGOs, local communities

Trócaire, Layer 2, Ethiopia

"Through our partner, Mikko Intigrated Development Programme Uganda, we support women to develop economic self-sufficiency and better health and education services for their families"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Major Gift

"Trócaire's long-term work with local partner organisations aims to improve citizens engagement and participation in decision making, promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation"

"We provide emergency support in the Nuba Mountains, supplying drugs and medical supplies through the Mother of Mercy Hospital (Gidel Hospital)

Trócaire, Layer 3, South Sudan

This is reflective of Trócaire's interventionary policy, the development, management and monitoring of projects is often through a consortium of partner organisations of which Trócaire is often a lead partner. While Trócaire's emergency response is carried out in partnership with local organisations; Trócaire provides resources and technical assistance. This is based on Trócaire's understanding (and Catholic Social Teaching principle of subsidiarity)[9] that local NGOs that will have immediate access to an area during an emergency, while having a better capacity to reach difficult-to-reach communities (Against the Odds, 2018). Trócaire's website provided their visitors within a public imaginary captured the corporeality and context of their work from the perspective of local participants. However, it was also noted that the more contextual imaginaries of aid and development remained problematic for the organisation. In particular, the range of different partnerships Trócaire above for example were not particularly well presented to the website visitor.

In fact, similar to the other three case studies the imaginary prioritised did very little to provide an understanding of Trócaire's specific role as a practitioner. For example, with regards long-term projects Trócaire adopts the role of supporting local partner organisations within countries, this is largely through technical support at country-level. In such instances, another leading partner will take charge of overall project management; strategic support, monitoring and liaising with key funding agencies (Promising Practices Report, 2018). The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence provides an example of another type of cross-sector partnership that Trócaire participates in. Here, Trócaire are a member of an Irish-based network that includes human rights and development organisations, with other academic institutions, Irish Aid and the Irish Defence Forces, around the aim of eliminating gender based violence (ICGBV, 2018). Here, Trócaire as lead partner manages and plans the delivery of programmes with fiver other partners, while contributing to research and policy work around the issue.

However, despite the varied nature of Trócaire's role as practitioner, the narratives promoted on their website regarding the organisations interventions promote a relatively reductive understanding. Additionally, the content analysis of the website's imagery noted a complete negation of visual depictions of Trócaire practitioners, as a result the narratives of Trócaire's role at grassroots generally remained quite ambiguous for the website's visitor. Thus, the lack

9 The third principle of 'subsidiarity' holds the belief that supporting those who have less should be done in a manner that respects their capacities and desires.

of description and visuality around Trócaire practitioners contributes to an ambiguity of organisation's own role within the overall imaginary they promoted through their website. Given Trócaire's willingness to communicate situated Global South narratives elsewhere, the lack of visibility and voice afforded to practitioners marks a loss of opportunity in terms of a counter-geography of aid and development.

7.4 Imaginaries of Aid and Development: Mediating Accountability and Legitimacy

In considering the production of uncritical public imaginaries of aid and development, the websites reflect (to varying degrees) a dominant trend outlined in the literature review; public accountability and institutional legitimacy are deeply entrenched within NGOs production of knowledge about their work (Dogra, 2014; Fowler, 2002). In terms of the representation of aid and development, the promotion of public imaginaries are deeply influenced by an organisation's need to maintain accountability and trustworthiness (Powers, 2018; Lang, 2013; Hilton et al., 2012; Fowler, 2002). These narratives that prioritise standardised reactive 'fixes' have been found to perpetuate public expectations of 'successful' intervention (Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014). Thus, the promotion of soft imaginaries within the case study websites is entrenched within a broader overarching process whereby legitimacy and accountability is a function of uncritical and hegemonic narratives. Considering each case studies' construction of aid and development imaginaries through this lens of accountability and legitimacy, provides some interesting insights to the potential for a critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourse.

Firstly, the prioritisation of soft imaginaries of aid and development within Concern's website was demonstrative of NGO communication more broadly; the promotion of uncritical and hegemonic knowledge served conventional donor public preferences for standardised 'quick fix' interventions (Slota, 2018; Dogra, 2014). This was particularly evident in Concern's prioritisation of aid and development imaginaries for their public audience throughout their website. Despite the realities of Concern's interventionary policy, the soft imaginaries prioritised for their website audience focused on demonstrations of measurable successes and tangible impacts. This was also tied to an overarching discourse running throughout the website's pages pertaining to efficiency and transparency. A clear example demonstrating the sheer dominance of such an objective in the website noted how a panel entitled '*How Your Money Is Spent*' (see figure 7.5) was found on over 57% of the entire sampled pages from Concern's website. Under such an influence, the prioritisation of soft imaginaries was tied to a demonstration of transparency and accountability. This resulted in the imaginary prioritised by Concern where their work was presented as a streamlined and successful process, this fulfilled the organisation's evident commitment for communicating efficient expenditure. Concern's public imaginaries of aid and development were operating within an organisational priority to maintain existing expectations of aid and development work, as opposed to challenge or disrupt them.

Figure 7.5 Concern's 'How Money is Spent' panel

In the case of Trócaire there was also evidence of the website responding to similar priorities albeit to a much smaller degree and influence. Trócaire's promotion of post-intervention success stories within donation pages can be considered on the basis that it operates within the same public-audience context as Concern. The same dominant public expectations are entrenched with 'quick fix' reactionary narratives of interventions, thus informing ideas of donor accountability and efficiency. However, the extent to which soft imaginaries of aid and

development were promoted within Trócaire's website demonstrates another key distinction that was evident across the four websites. Trócaire's website displayed a markedly reduced propensity for discourses relating to donor accountability or transparency. Instead, accountability and transparency is largely confined to a dedicated webpage accessible from anywhere within the website. As a result, reducing the salience of a public accountability objective underpinned Trócaire's production of contextual geographies of aid and development.

Tellingly, the influence of public accountability and legitimacy also impacted the imaginaries produced by Pencils of Promise and Acumen. As noted in the literature review, social entrepreneurship theory suggested the potential for circumventing conventional expectations of public donors through the activation of different support networks (Smith, Stevens, and Barr, 2010). However, despite any potential that the organisations' alternative support networks may have had for re-working ideas of legitimacy and public accountability, these were not evident in the public imaginaries produced about aid and development throughout Acumen or Pencils of Promise's websites. In both case study websites, the promotion of uncritical and decontextualised imaginaries of interventions negated public engagement with the complexity, reality or the nuance of their work. As opposed to re-orientating success and legitimacy towards a more critical engagement with intervention, both Acumen and Pencils of Promise prioritised a soft imaginary of aid and development similar to that noted in Concern. In fact, the imaginaries of aid and development prioritised by both organisations' websites pose significant questions regarding the capacity of social entrepreneurships to remove themselves form conventional donor expectations. For example, within Acumen's website there was a clear emphasis placed on promoting and legitimising the organisation's approaches, as opposed to explaining how they are operationalised within a context of an investee company. Here, the introduction of these models reflected a demonstration of success and efficiency based on social impact, however the public expectations based on problem/solution narratives did not encourage a reorientation of success. Given that Acumen's alternative approach to development work, and in particular their 'non-conventional' use of public donation, the organisation's prioritisation of promotional objectives reflects a pre-requisite essential to forming a base of support.

Moreover, as opposed to engaging the public with an understanding of how the model works within the context of the Global South, the representation of Acumen's work was underpinned by dismissal conventional charity. Narratives justify and legitimise Acumen's work on the

basis that capital does not otherwise exist for these companies in the market, or that conventional charity-funding curtails the value of failure and risk afforded to developing such services/products. Moreover, a promotional priority was evident in the extensive research content provided in the website (see Chapter 8). Research publications on Acumen's models were provided on many of the webpages within Acumen's website, particularly targeting other actors within the development sector. However, rather than promoting a critical engagement with the suitability of such investment models in the context of inequality issues, narratives framing the models are cognisant of criticisms regarding conventional approaches. As a result, despite the sophisticated network of financial support underpinning the organisation, Acumen's prioritisation of soft imaginaries of aid and development remain entwined to conventional public support and legitimacy priorities.

Unlike Acumen, Pencils of Promise's models for development did not reflect a set of unique principles, however the imaginaries of aid and development prioritised by Pencils of Promise demonstrated an attempt to re-package of standard conventional practice. Instead, Pencils of Promise's *'100% Promise'* and *'Theory of Change'* approaches signalled practices that are not uncommon within the NGO sector more broadly. Facilitated through partnerships with corporations, Pencils of Promise undertook a series of cause-related partnerships and the donation of both financial and non-financial resources. As a result of these partnerships, the organisation could make the guarantees on online donations (100% Promise) and the provision of innovative equipment and technology to students (Theory of Change). Yet, the role that corporate donation plays in supporting Pencils of Promise's support costs is notably marginalised within the imaginaries website; re-packaged instead into an emotive and affective narrative of the '100% Promise'. The principle of a '*100% Promise*' refers to a guarantee that 100% of a donation made online will go straight to a development programme. It is explained that the 100% Promise is facilitated through the existence of additional income covers operational costs and overheads. Similarly, Pencils of Promise promote the provision of technology and innovative learning tools through a *'Theory of Change'* narrative. Pencils of Promise enter into corporate partnerships with major corporate actors including Google, Goldman and Sachs, and British Airways to deliver many of their 'Theory of Change' programmes. Again, however the imaginary prioritised by Pencils of Promise negates this significant role of corporate actors in the provision of their programmes.

Pencils of Promise's approaches therefore demonstrate a *discursive* re-packaging of their work, in doing so exposed a clear objective to maintain dominant public expectations of what an

NGO looks like, including what funding they should have. The imaginaries of aid and development prioritised by Pencils of Promise operated within an effort to maintain an ambiguity around the role corporate partnerships play in the delivery of their programmes. Despite being a core supporting element of their process, Pencils of Promise demonstrated a clear re-framing of their corporate partnerships. While corporate donors are referenced intermittently through the website, they are largely discursively re-framed in terms of narratives around donation efficiency and programme innovation. This highlights an anxiety that is particularly evident within (conventional) NGO management. As Hilton et al (2012) noted in their study of innovation within the NGO sector, the public remain generally unaware of relationships that NGOs have with government and business actors; donor publics are therefore traditionally sceptical around the role of business actors within the non-profit sector. Moreover, Smith, Stevens and Barr (2010) found that such public expectations are cause for concern in NGO management. NGO leaders expressed extreme caution in activating revenue generating opportunities from the for-profit sector, arguing that it could potentially undermine the character of their organisation and damage the public's trust (Smith, Stevens and Barr, 2010). Pencils of Promise's re-packaging of their corporate partnerships perhaps reflect a similar hesitancy. Pencils of Promise's imaginary of aid and development completely negates the significant role that corporates play within their work, the subsequent re-packaging this role into narratives of innovation and transparency demonstrates a priority and anxiety to maintain existing public expectations regarding what NGO operations. Thus, Pencils of Promise's construction of aid and development were embedded within priorities relating to accountability and legitimacy also.

7.5 Concluding Comments

Ultimately, the websites' construction of aid and development imaginaries extended upon the constructions of poverty discussed in the previous chapter. As a result, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise were found to have promoted narratives of their work that prioritised a decontextualised representation of aid and development. This contributed to the ambiguous public expectations of NGO work that emerged through all three of these websites focused on efficiency and success. Despite the multidimensional and contextual principles of their interventionary policies, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise contributed to deeply problematic and reductive public imaginaries of their individual approaches. Interestingly, despite their social entrepreneurship principles of reconfiguring their support networks, neither

Acumen nor Pencils of Promise demonstrated a willingness to disrupt conventional public imaginaries. Instead, it was Trócaire that emerged with more contextual geographies of aid and development (if not a completely nuanced account) that extended upon their constructions of poverty. As a result of this distinction, the chapter found a clear relationship between a prioritisation of accountability and legitimacy priorities, and the promotion of soft imaginaries of aid and development. Thus, the chapter demonstrates that the construction of counter-geographies of aid and development is best served by a reduced priority for donor accountability within public engagement objectives. Crucially, these four case studies however show that the prioritisation of such an objective is not particularly tied to a dependency on public donation, but more a willingness to engage other public engagement objectives.

8. MEDIATING PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY AND NGO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the third research objective in this thesis, examining the public response promoted and facilitated by the four case study websites, and the narratives of responsibility prioritised:

> *To unpack the connections promoted by each NGO website in the presentation of distant suffering, focusing particularly on the role of these digital platforms in promoting responses to address distant suffering, and examining in particular how public responsibility is mediated.*

In the previous two chapters, the analysis highlighted the production of public understandings and expectations regarding Global South poverty and NGO work. These discussions demonstrated how the four websites broadly diverged along two trends; the prioritisation of uncritical and reductive (soft) understandings in the case of Pencils of Promise, Concern and Acumen, and a more contextually nuanced engagement promoted by Trócaire. Both chapters also noted how the production of such knowledge (and the distinctions between the websites) was tied to clear public engagement objectives of each organisations. The soft construction of understandings prioritised within the websites of Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern for example, were underpinned by a clear prioritisation of narratives regarding donation, accountability and organisational legitimacy. Trócaire's website in contrast promoted a more nuanced construction of public understandings, informed by a notable marginalisation of donation and accountability priorities. This chapter focuses on how these engagement priorities emerged through the websites, unpacking the impact they have on the types of responses promoted and facilitated by the organisations. First the chapter identifies the narratives of Global South need that script ideas of 'help', examining how these 'narratives of need' looked to prompt specific responses for the websites' visitors. Next the chapter examines how the websites contribute to a public imaginary help, considering the actions facilitated on the websites and the levels of engagement with the Global South they promoted for the visitors. Finally, the chapter highlights the impact the organisations' public engagement priorities played the constructions of public responsibility. As a result, the chapter demonstrates the key

discourses around public response promoted through the four websites, and it notes the public engagement priorities that obstructed the construction of a relational responsibility and/or a critically engaged audience.

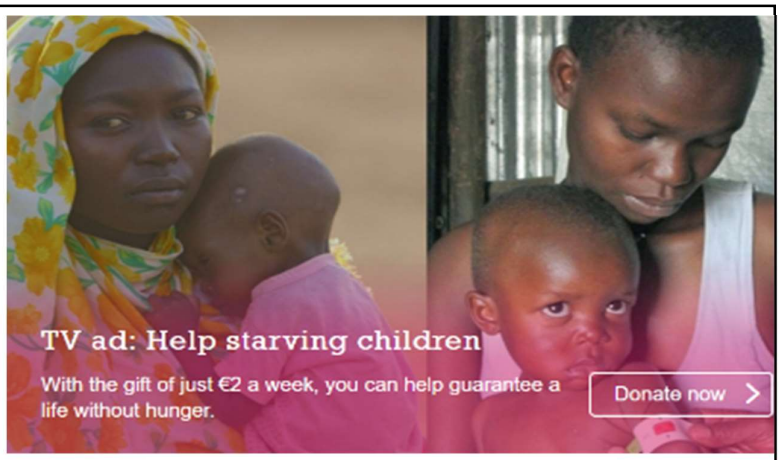
8.2 Connecting With Distant 'Others' & Prompting User Response

In a review of the literature regarding the mediation of distant suffering and public response, the creation and promotion of connections between viewer and 'Other' was noted by many researchers (Kyriakidou, 2015; Scott, 2015; Chouliaraki, 2013; 2006; Baillie-Smith, 2013; Höijer, 2004). Within such literature it is the representation of distant strangers that construct such connections, these in turn inform how or indeed if we respond to the experience of the distant stranger (Chouliaraki, 2013). In the context of this research, public responses and responsibility were framed through the select creation and promotion of such connections. All four websites were found to contain representations that looked to draw the public closer to a Global South 'Other', and through the promotion of quite a varied range of connections between visitor and distant 'Others' they prompted a diverse series of responses. The analysis identified a series of 'narratives of need' within the four websites; messages communicated an experience of Global South need to the websites' visitors in order to mobilise an obligation to respond. This section considers how representations of the Global South were produced to promote specific connections and prioritise certain desired responses by the case study websites.

8.2.1 Emotive Based Donation

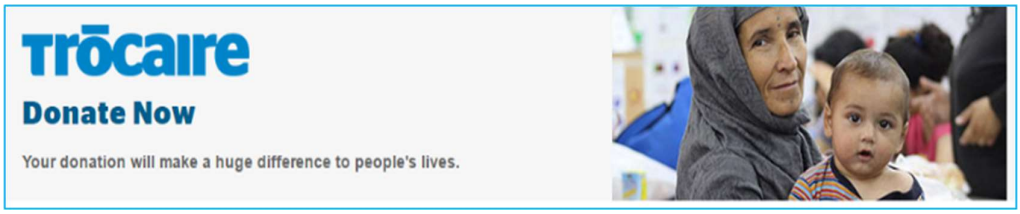
With the exception of Acumen, the case study websites were found to prompt donation through a representation of Global South dependency. This was found to promote an emotive connection that encouraged compassion for the Global South 'Other', thereby attempting to positively influence the user's choice to give money. Specifically, through presenting Global South characters as 'worthy' or 'disserving' within messages framing donation prompts, depictions promoted by Concern, Pencils of Promise and Trócaire all looked to operationalise a clear moral clarity for visitors. Here, reflecting Wells (2013) melodramatic narrative arcs, the websites' donation messages present the threat of violence or extreme poverty as the moral wrongs that are enforced upon an innocent victim. It is this helplessness and/or innocence of the Global South 'Other' that draws the visitor's attention and prompts a response to help.

For example, both Concern and Trócaire were found to frame their donation prompts through a narrative that clearly depicted vulnerable Global South characters. Call to donate buttons were frequently presented to the viewers alongside the representation of suffering children and/or mothers in both case studies (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2). Within these representations there was a clear use of melodramatic tropes (Wells, 2013; Anker, 2005) to create a connection between the websites' visitors and a disserving/worthy suffering 'Other'. As exemplified in Figures 8.1,8.2 and 8.3 the melodramatic gestures and gaze constructed an emotive and affective narrative of suffering and deprivation. The characters helplessness and vulnerability is mediated to the website visitor through the nature of their gaze and gestures; the gaze of the mothers and children (in both Figures 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3), or indeed the averted gaze of mothers in Figure 8.1 were melodramatic gestures used within the donation narratives of both websites.



Concern, Home

Figure 8.1 Concern's Donation Narrative



"Your support will provide free legal representation and legal rights training for women in Gaza"

"Your support will provide counselling and psycho-social care to vulnerable women who have undergone severe trauma"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Gaza Project

Figure 8.2 Trócaire's Donation Narratives

Reflecting donation campaigns more broadly (see Keenaghan & Reilly, 2017; Dogra, 2014), these gestures are operationalised in the context of donation prompts so as to engender the sympathy and compassion of the websites' visitors towards the suffering character(s). These depictions of suffering and vulnerability create an immediacy within the narratives prompting donation as a moral obligation on the visitor (Wells, 2013 and Anker, 2005). The websites' use of these depictions also occurred within narratives of need that established a clear moral legibility of right and wrong (Wells, 2013). The starvation of children, the forced emigration of refugees, the threat of violence are all positioned in order to prompt users to feel the types of anger and compassion discussed by Kyriakidou, 2015; Höijer, 2004. For example, Figure 8.1 notes how Trócaire's website frames donation alongside references to violation of women's rights and the psychological trauma of conflict for women and children. Similarly, Figure 8.3 demonstrates Concern's creation of a message that reflected on the malnutrition and starvation of children ("*These helpless children need your support")*. Together with the accompanying imagery, these narrative arcs demarcated a clear moral legibility by referencing the inequalities and injustices of both hunger and conflict so as to obligate website visitors to respond and donate.

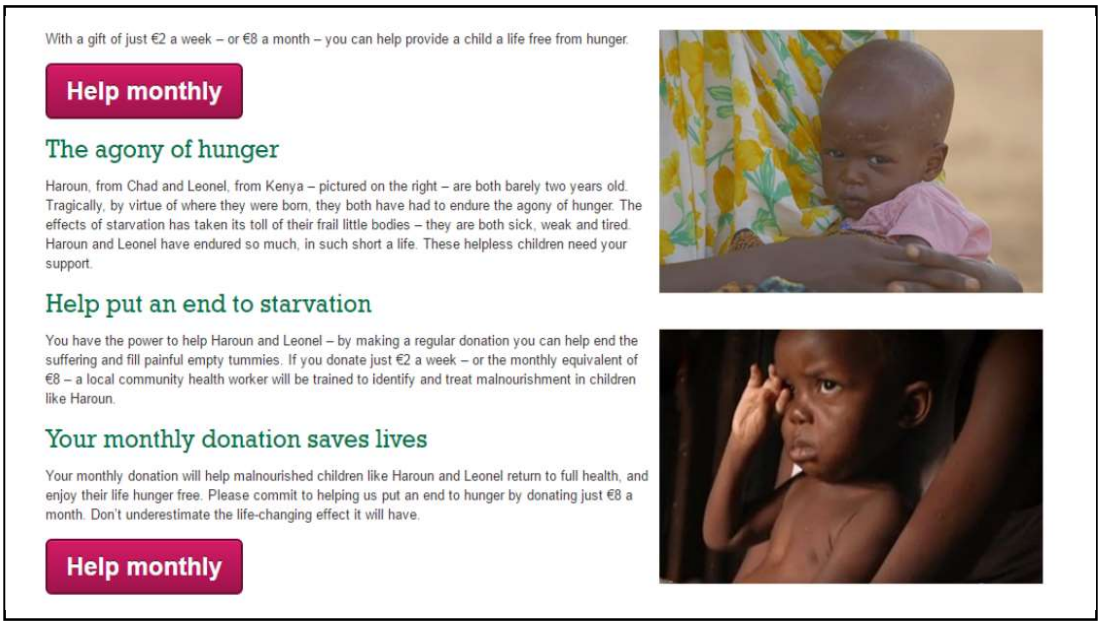
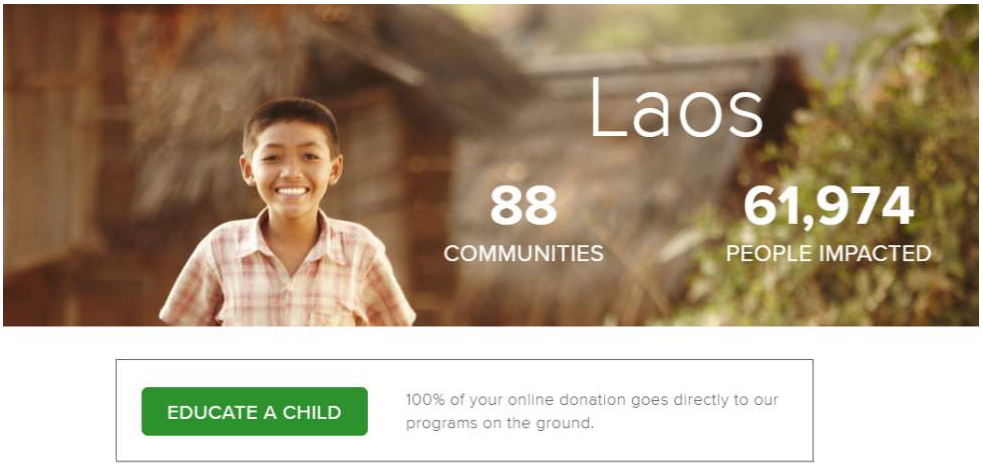


Figure 8.3 Concern's Donation Narrative (Concern, Layer 1,

In the case of donation prompts in the websites of Pencils of Promise, messages were found to promote a melodramatic narrative arc that Wells (2013) refers to as a 'redemption narrative'. Again, the melodramatic gestures are evident, here depictions of children smiling and laughing to the camera were all mobilised (see Figure 8.4). Here, prompts to donate occurred alongside imagery depicting the desired solution; children smiling and playing. This constructs an emotive and comforting narrative around the successful provision of education. Through these depictions of post-intervention success, the visitor is encouraged to respond to the lack of education and poor quality of education by to extending the 'promise' of education to other students. Pencils of Promise embedded these images within narrative that presented a moral clarity of a child's right to education, and a prosperous future. For example, the lack of education is positioned as an inhibited future, the visitor is reminded numerous times through the website's donation narratives; *"A quality education changes lives"* (Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Donate) Within such a framing, the website visitor is prompted to feel compassion or sympathy towards the Global South, through identifying the lack of a quality education as something wrong and in need of 'fixing'. However, as noted in Chapters 6 and 7 these narratives of need are occurring within a reductive and simplified construction of Global South education and provision.

Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Guatemala

Pencils of Promise, Home



Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Laos

Figure 8.4 Pencils Of Promise Donation Narratives

As mentioned previously (see Chapter 7), Trócaire's website also framed donation through a post-intervention narrative similar to Pencils of Promise. As shown in Figure 8.5, Global South dependency was somewhat re-reworked in that the farmer or family is less reliant on the donor for a reactionary response. The provision of a sprinklers and business loans for example enhances the capacity/resilience of the benefactor. Here, the moral obligation in the narrative is prompted through the post-intervention imagery that contains gestures that depict the prosperity and success of providing communities with sprinklers and loans. These narratives perpetuate an equally emotive response in that they signal the redemption narrative referenced by Wells (2013). The agency, prosperity and/or productiveness implied within the narratives provided a satisfying resolution to the problems of unsuccessful crops and lack of income capacity. This redemption narrative however differs from Pencils of Promise as the website visitor is encouraged to react in a less reactionary manner; the solution requires a practical enhancement of Global South capacity to address their own needs i.e. protect their own crops and set up their own business. However, the connections encouraged between the website visitor and distant stranger were equally reductive in that the visitor is obliged to help extend this success to others, thus the dependency of the Global South on the donor is maintained.

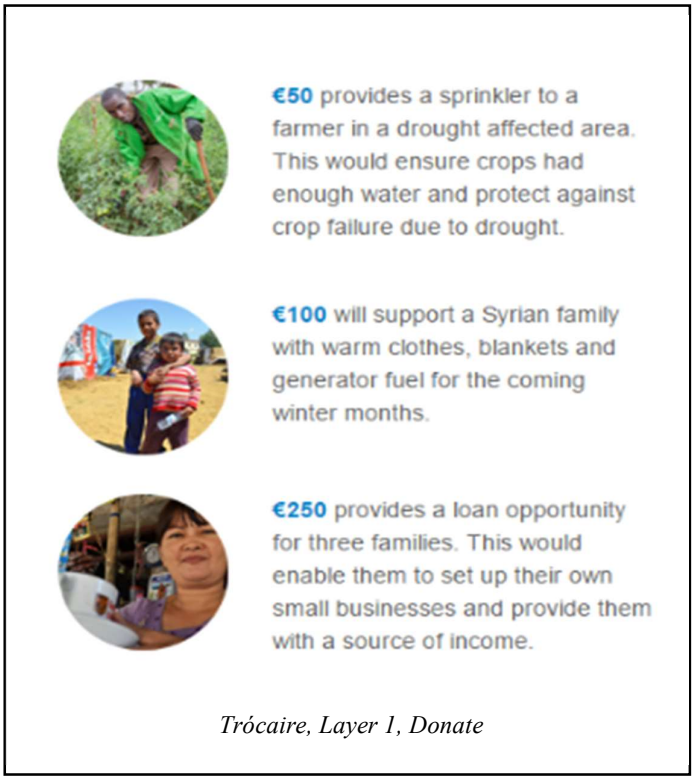


Figure 8.5 Trócaire's Donation Narratives

In the context of donation prompts, the websites of Concern, Pencils of Promise and Trócaire therefore looked to activate what Höijer (2004) referred to as a discourse of global compassion. The characterisations and narratives deployed within donation prompts sought to establish feelings of sympathy and compassion towards the Global South 'Other', based on the depiction of Global South helplessness, vulnerability and/or dependency. The prioritisation of children and women presented a hierarchising of suffering that is evident throughout NGO donation

pleas more broadly; the representation of childhood and/or motherhood proposed Global South people as 'worthy' of compassion and helping (see Dogra, 2014; Manzo, 2008). However, in the context of representing counter-geographies and promoting critical engagement, relational responsibilities were not promoted within these representations. Instead, the prioritisation of global compassion discourse created a central spectator-position for the website visitor. The emotive-based connections forged within these donation narratives reflect Ravenscroft's (2004) acts of spectatorship for the websites' audiences; the representation of Global South dependency and helplessness promoted for a website's visitor (the spectator) a connection based on difference and dependency of Global South 'Other'. Moreover, such connections between the suffering 'Other' and the visitor that are based on emotion rather than logic promotes an uncritical engagement (Richey, 2017; Dogra, 2014; Wells, 2013), thus negating an engagement with issues like relational responsibility. As a result, prompts to donate within the websites of Concern, Trócaire and Pencils of Promise dismissed any critical engagement with causality or context (see also Chapter 6).

8.2.2 Post-Humanitarian Fundraising and Learning

Fundraising and education programmes within the websites of Concern, Pencils of Promise and Acumen were all found to contain narratives the centred on the benefits to the visitor themselves. These three case studies promoted their fundraising activities and education programmes through a narrative of self-benefit and/or their self-actualisation as morally good citizen. As a result, such narratives encouraged connections between the website visitor and the Global South that reflect those within a post-humanitarian engagement (Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2013; Madianou, 2013). Prompts regarding Concern's fundraising activities were framed withing narratives of personal physical achievement or moral leadership. Similarly, in Pencils of Promise's website fundraising activities were incentivised through narratives of adventure, challenge and experience:

"Trek Machu Picchu! Machu Picchu is one of the world's most popular charity challenges and its easy to see why. Words can't describe the feeling of setting eyes on fabulous lost city of Machu Picchu for the first time"

"The Berlin Marathon is one of the world's greatest marathons, with over 40,000 entries expected – don't miss out on your chance to be one"

"Calling all adventures! Here's a challenge and a half to get stuck into; trek, cycle and water raft you war around Kenya"

Concern, Layer 1, Take Part in an Event

"Some of our charity trekkers are novices, others full blown athletes, all of varying levels of ability and fitness. Last year, our oldest trekker was 65, our youngest 13 – age doesn't matter"

Concern, Layer 2, Slieve Donard

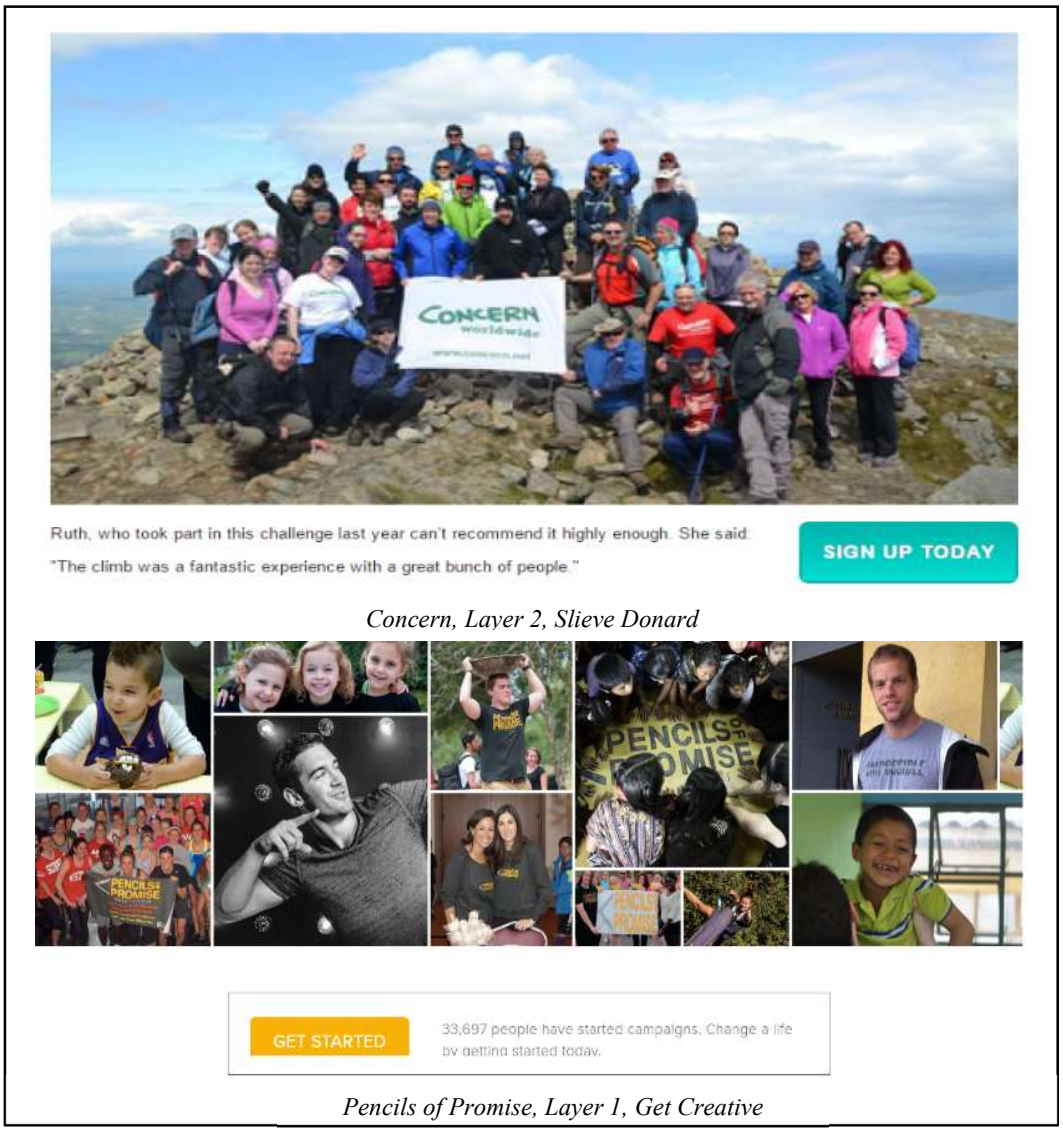
"Run a marathon, bike across you state or even jump out of a plane -the sky is the limit when it comes to your campaign"

"Throw a party, have a movie night or organize a 5k in your town"

"Want to join them [marathon runners in New York] this year? Not only will you get PoP swag and a pasta dinner, you will be running for a good cause"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Get Creative

Here, prompts to fundraise were encouraged through ideas of personal achievement, overcoming challenges and gain once-in-a-lifetime experiences in both websites. The websites' visitors were therefore encouraged to participate on the basis of these personal incentives, with little-to-no reference to Global South need; issues of inequality or injustice were routinely negated within these obligations to participate in fundraising. This is cognisant of the sensibility growing throughout the NGO sector that has been highlighted by researchers like Richey, (2018), Chouliaraki (2012) and Madianou (2013); the post-humanitarian turn is becoming increasingly evident within public engagement of distant suffering and poverty. Connections draw within such narratives promote a moral obligation to 'do-good' that is subsumed within a consumerist demand i.e. gaining a reward or benefit for themselves. In the websites of Concern and Pencils of Promise, narratives promoting fundraising mobilised the idea of achievement, adventure and fun so as to encourage the user to participate, however in doing so the Global South 'Other' is completely negated. Relatedly, a common element framing fundraising in Concern and Pencils of Promise was the comforting idea of being part of a group. Imagery depicting fundraising events included Global North publics taking part in productive and/or adventurous tasks such as climbing, bake sales, or money collections (see Figure 8.6).



Concern, Layer 2, Slieve Donard

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Get Creative

Figure 8. 6 Concern and Pencils of Promise Fundraising Prompts

Once again, such depictions looked to encourage the website visitor to get involved in fundraising events and join like-minded groups of people. In line with post-humanitarian logic, such imagery focus on the experiences and enjoyment of being part of a fundraising group. Here, the obligation to get involved is entirely excluded from Global South issues or indeed the work of the organisation, instead the participant's own self-actualisation as a morally good person is the only justification offered within these narratives for taking part. This was also evident in how Acumen and Concern framed engagement with their education programmes. Concern's development education programme for example were based upon a prioritisation of quite an ambiguous framing, without any prompts to critically engage with issues of global

inequality or injustice. Instead prompts to download reference the benefits of the resources to teachers/students:

"For participating schools, each school student will receive a Hunger Hero certificate and a Super School certificate for each school"

"Teachers will receive fun superhero themed packs full of games, lesson plans and information on issues of hunger and food waste"

"We have created a resource pack and four video pieces examining prevention, stigma, and living positively. The pack costs €10 to order or you can download it for free"

"The pack is ideal for use across a range of learning environments whether young children, teenagers or adults" Concern, Layer 2, Secondary Schools

Moreover, as the cornerstone of the organisation's development education policy, the 'Concern Debates' competition was embedded within a narrative of pertaining to the 'opportunity' available to students;

"It gives students the opportunity to research and debate issues that effect those living in the developing world"

Concern, Layer 2, I Want to Debate

In Concern's website the visitor is encouraged to take part in the annual national debate competition through a narrative based on the opportunity to achieve personal growth, acquire new skills and experiences and gain the prestige of being part of a national competition. Narratives framing Concern's education programmes therefore did very little to connect participation in debates to knowledge promoting relational responsibility, where participation could promote a self-reflexive engagement with global inequality issues. Participation within the debates or any of Concern's educational material, was found to negate any framing of participation that highlighted ideas of a critical global citizenship that challenges the soft and uncritical constructions of poverty and interventions promoted by the website more broadly (see Chapter 6).

In Acumen's website both their education and community engagement programmes are framed through a similar post-humanitarian logic, where engagement was based on the visitor's self-actualisation as a morally good person. Acumen encouraged the creation of '*Leadership Councils*' and '*Acumen Chapters*' for example; volunteer-led groups that draw together

interested supporters to learn about Acumen's approaches and engaging their communities with the organisation. Participation in these groups was framed through a narrative of fulfilling an individual's desire to 'do something more beyond donation or fundraising'. Prospective participants are told:

"*Acumen is a growing network of emerging leaders from all over the world […] The world needs you to lead. This is your invitation"*

Acumen, Layer 1, Volunteers

"The future depends on a new breed of leader, ready to solve the world's most challenging problems"

Acumen, Layer 3, Become a Leader

"Developing leaders who challenge the status quo"

Acumen, Layer 3, Regional Fellows

These prompts to register or learn more about involvement in an '*Acumen Chapter*' or '*Leadership Council*' were framed through references to leadership and citizenship. This reflects a post-humanitarian communication that incentivises engagement on the basis of the participant's self-actualisation as a morally engaged citizen. As noted in Chapters 6 and 7, Acumen's narratives regarding Global South poverty and their interventions prioritised the legitimacy of the approach, as opposed to a nuanced understanding with issues impacting global inequalities. Thus, participation in these groups promoted an awareness and learning that was incorporated within the broader agenda of expanding the visibility of Acumen.

In regards the organisation's education programmes, '*Regional Fellowship*' and '*Global Fellowship*', narratives encouraging participation were noted to highlight the opportunities that participation would provide the user including networking with other like-minded individuals:

"Passionately curious volunteers from all around the world who are learning with Acumen and helping to inspire their communities"

Acumen, Layer 1, Volunteers

"Do you want to step up and make a change in the world? Our leadership programs provide an opportunity to dig into your vision, your purpose, and your self-knowledge. They bring together like-minded individuals who are as hungry as you are to change the way the world tackles poverty"

Acumen, Layer 3, Become a Leader

"Through these programmes we hope to create an interconnected web of global leaders who share values, collaborate with each other, and drive change"

Acumen, Layer 3, Regional Fellow

"Join a community of over 300 individuals, corporations and foundations who there's a better way and are helping us challenge the status quo"

Acumen, Layer 3, Our Manifesto

The narratives promoting these education programmes (and the commitment involved) imply a pre-established commitment to poverty eradication. This was particularly evident as the benefits and skills gained through participation in these programmes prioritise actors who already work or wish to work within the development sector. For example, Acumen's *Fellowship* educational programmes forward the opportunity to Global South participants (*Regional Fellowship*) and Global North participants (*Global Fellowship*) to engage in a year-long programme of learning and placement in development contexts. The level of commitment and knowledge encouraged withing such programmes implies a pre-established connection to the development sector. Additionally, Acumen offered three online educational courses through their website that included public speaking, communication skills and the principles of social entrepreneurship. Participation in these three courses were similarly framed through a post-humanitarian narrative around gaining important skills for community leaders engaging public audiences.

"Build critical skills in the areas of leadership development, communication, skills, team building, change management, and coaching and development"

"You will be confident in using stories, especially personal stories, as part of your communication toolkit"

"Know how to tell stories and use a specific set of storytelling skills"

Acumen, Layer, 2 Storytelling

Overall, Acumen demonstrated a priority for using their educational and community engagement programmes to broaden their network of support within the development sector itself. This was reflective of an overarching public engagement objective evident throughout Acumen's website; public engagement narratives were tied to a priority of engaging the NGO sector with Acumen's model of development. As a result, critically engaging a general public audience with Global South poverty was largely negated within the responses/responsibility promoted by Acumen's website.

Overall, in the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise, prompts to fundraise and take part in education programmes were incentivised to visitors based on the opportunities and

skills that could be gained from participation. Such framings promoted what Chouliaraki (2013) and Madianou (2013) referred to as the 'introspection' of post-humanitarian communication. Physical challenges, adventure, competition and gaining skills were all self-benefiting rewards proposed by Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise to encourage participation. Moreover, in the websites of Pencils of Promise and Concern, any links between public participation and the NGOs' work remained marginalised if not completely dismissed. In the case of Acumen, the benefits and rewards for the participant were linked to being part of the organisation's 'movement' as an alternative model for development. However, any potential critical engagement with Global South poverty or interventions remained negated in Acumen also, subsumed instead by the promotion and legitimisation of the organisation and its model for development. Thus, Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise's framing of prompts in fundraising and learning activities ultimately encouraged the visitors' self-identification as a morally engaged citizen. In considering the construction of public responsibility, such activities were negated *any* connection with the Global South 'Other', or indeed issues pertaining to inequality, much less relational responsibility.

8.2.3 Community Engagement and Awareness

Finally, in considerations of the types of engagement prompted through the websites, both Acumen and Trócaire's community outreach activities warrant an additional discussion. In Acumen, community outreach was particularly tied to engaging the visitors with research and policy documents; while Trócaire's community outreach revolved around a broader range activities and justice campaigns. However, the discourses framing the promotion of these activities diverged between the two case study websites. In the case of Acumen, their website demonstrated a higher tendency to prompt users to download research policy material and promote social media sharing. For example, the content analysis of actions prompted by clickable buttons noted that 67% of buttons prompted such actions. This was also reflective of Acumen's prioritisation of public engagement that increases their network of support for the principles of their approach. Prompts to download policy and research documents regarding Acumen's principles were embedded throughout a broad range of the website's pages, these encouraged the visitor to engage with a wealth of evidence-based research with the aim of increasing the organisation's reach within the development sector:

> *"We share ideas for others to build on and make better"*
>
> Acumen, Layer 1, Who We Are

"We won't succeed alone, which is why we share ideas that empower others to make change"

"We are taking the very best ideas, distilled from more than a decade of investing in companies and leaders, and synthesizing and sharing the globally, so others can accelerate their impact"

Acumen, Layer 2, Publications

Here, Acumen's community outreach through the production and sharing of research demonstrates an anxiety to grow support for the approach within the sector. This is vital to Acumen, as the justification and legitimisation of their model of poverty eradication is ultimately predicated on its acceptance and use by funding actors and social entrepreneurs requiring investments. As a result, this community outreach marks a significant (and perhaps pre-requisite) component to Acumen's sustainability. Thus, the sector's adoption of the model and the public's acceptance of its approach is needed for Acumen as an organisation to sustain itself, perhaps to a greater degree than donation or fundraising (which are comparatively less promoted in the website). However, this engagement with research publications was framed through a negation of relational engagement with Global South poverty (see Chapter 6). Moreover, given that these research publications were promoted on the basis of ensuring organisational legitimacy, prompts to engage with the material dismisses any critical engagement with the nature of Acumen's model as means of poverty eradication. Thus, the prompts to engagement with Acumen's research publications prioritises the organisation's own justification and legitimisation concerns, as opposed to promoting any relational responsibility or critical global citizenship.

On the other hand, the community outreach activities promoted through Trócaire's website offered a broad range of activities ranging from fundraising, volunteering, attending solidarity events, downloading educational material and the signing of petitions. All of these activities, to varying degrees, were framed by Trócaire's core organisational principle for engaging the public with issues of global injustice:

"[…we are…] Tackling the structural causes of poverty by mobilising for justice in Ireland and abroad"

Trócaire, Layer 1, How We Work

With the exception of donation, this public engagement priority framed the majority of community outreach activities promoted by the website. Yet, the salience of this priority within prompts encouraging visitor's engagement differed across actions. For example, information pages regarding Trócaire's fundraising activities prioritised a relationship between Trócaire

and their dependency on community support. Unlike Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern, these events were not linked to an ambiguous relationship between North and South or self-reward, in fact Trócaire's fundraising negated solidarity or specific issues of the Global South. Instead fundraising events were framed as a way in which the community could engage with the organisation itself through locally organised fundraisers:

"Host a tea party, cake sale, or coffee morning in aid of Trócaire"

"Inspiring people all over Ireland are doing incredible things to raise funds for Trócaire. Join them!"

Organise a Trad for Trócaire session in your locality during 'Trad Week'

Trócaire, Layer 1, Fundraising

In the case of fundraising, global justice and inequality was marginalised within Trócaire's prompts, and was instead orientated towards communities' connection with Trócaire itself. While this may contribute to similar promotional objective to that of Acumen's Chapters, a key difference was noted in terms of how fundraisers' roles were described in Trócaire's website. The activity of fundraising was situated within a process of the NGO's work; Trócaire as a charity depends on such support and require the income generated in communities from fundraising. This signalled a difference within the case study websites; outside of donation, Trócaire avoided prioritising activities that actively reinforced an 'introspection' of visitors' comfort and privilege. While fundraising and community events are all subject to visitors' own motives and inherently hold a capacity for reward and self-actualisation, Trócaire's website tended to avoid utilising post-humanitarian logic or a compassion discourse as an engagement strategy. Instead the website provided visitors with information about fundraising that contextualised such events in terms of a connection between the organisation itself and its supporters.

On the other hand, Trócaire's other community outreach activities were incorporated within a much more salient promotion of global justice, climate justice and human rights:

"*Are you passionate about global justice and human rights? Become a volunteer with Trócaire in Ireland and join the fight for justice"*

"Our education, campaigning, parish and fundraising work in Ireland is a vital part of that fight for justice"

"Do you want add your voice to a call for a more just world? Our campaign activists help us shine a light on the issues of injustice affecting some of the poorest communities in the world. From climate change to human rights abuses, we need your help to raise awareness with the Irish public and to help persuade our governments to take action for justice"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Volunteer

Climate Justice: "Focus area for our advocacy, campaigning, education and parish work"

Education "Our development education programme brings global justice issues alive in Irish classrooms"

Volunteer Programme: "Join us to challenge the root causes of poverty and injustice, and make a real difference"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Trócaire's Work

"Show Solidarity: Please show your solidarity by attending upcoming vigils and rallies"

Trócaire Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

Narratives around volunteering and attending solidarity events were situated within justice-based connections to issues like climate justice, human rights violations, and advocating for political greater political response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Of all the case study websites, this demonstrated the only NGO who actively and explicitly prompted connections between public engagement activities and issues of inequality and injustice. Moreover, visitors were prompted to engage with these activities without a discourse pertaining to the generation of income or promotion of organisational legitimacy.

Trócaire's development education programme also prompted a range of activities that encouraged visitors to reflect on the connections between Irish society and global issues:

"Development Education is an active and creative process to increase awareness and understanding of the world we live in. it challenges perceptions and stereotypes by encouraging optimism, participation and action for a just world"

"Students are supported to make connections between their own lives and international social justice issues, and be empowered to make a positive difference in the world"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Education

Here, Trócaire's prompts to engage with development education activities were situated within obligations to self-reflect and mobilise action. As demonstrated in the quotations above, there was an explicit objective in Trócaire's framing of development education to situate causality within the relations between Ireland and the Global South, and to mobilise public response

towards policy change and heightened awareness. Notably, development education within Trócaire was not limited to the classroom; the organisation provided material for parish leaders and other community-based educators to engage their respective audiences with issues such of climate justice and human rights. Moreover, Trócaire provided grants (the *Irish Grant Scheme*) for sums between €500-20,000 to school or individual projects that engage the public with issues of global, social and/or climate justice. While such projects undoubtedly provide similar opportunities and rewards to schools and students as the *Concern Debates* for example, a key distinction between the two was Trócaire's discursive framing of such activities for website visitors. Unlike Concern and Acumen's education programmes, the rationale was framed by a discourse pertaining to global justice and advocacy;

"To educate people regarding the causes of global injustice and poverty and how this relates to Ireland, North and South"

"To motivate and mobilise communities here at home to take action on issues of global injustice and poverty"

"To advocate for specific changes, be that in structures, policies, attitudes and/or behaviour, to address global injustice and poverty"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Education

Another element of Trócaire's community engagement was parish-based engagement. As the aid agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Trócaire's community engagement incorporates an element of parish-specific work including the production of liturgy material and parish (fundraising) collections. However, analysis noted that religious discourse and iconography was minimal throughout the website, and material pertaining to parish-based engagement was contained to one page ('*Parish Resources*') of the website. In addition to the reduced religious discourse, the website's separation of development education, fundraising and community engagement from parish-based engagement was reflective of an attempt to keep its target-audience expanded beyond parish-based groupings.

Additionally, at the time of archiving Trócaire's website encouraged visitors to sign two online public petitions. These advocated to the Irish Government (and the Northern Ireland Assembly) for changes in political policies regarding both the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the divestment of fossil fuels within Ireland. These petitions were part of a broader campaign of engagement within the websites around both topics, as prompts to sign the petitions were accompanied by prompts to engage with other related activities including relevant education material and/or

Trócaire-organised protest events. In terms of the prompts framing these activities, the website promoted narratives that explicitly sought to tie Global North responsibility to issues:

"Trócaire has be consistently calling for greater diplomatic engagement to find a political solution to the crisis and for commitments on humanitarian aid and refugee resettlement to be honoured by the Irish and EU governments"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

"*Fossil fuels are a major cause of climate change- accounting for around 60% percent of our global carbon emissions. Developing countries are feeling the impacts of climate change the most. We must stop investing in these dirty fuels and invest instead in a fair future for all*"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Republic of Ireland

In terms of the petitions aligned to these campaigns, the website visitor was prompted to send a petition to a user's local TD, to advocate for policy change on both issues. Both petitions were directly focused on highlighting a public responsibility to encourage the Irish Government to act. In terms of the Refugee Crisis petition, the narrative forges a clear connection between Aleppo, and the genocides that occurred in Srebrenica and Rwanda. The international inaction to the bombing of Aleppo was linked to the devastating effects that slow international response had on violence against civilians in Bosnia and Rwanda:

"When is 'never again' going to finally mean never again?"

"The world stood by in 1994 as genocide was unleashed on Rwanda. One year later, we again stood aside as thousands were massacred in Srebrenica"

"Despite the recent statements on the issue, our Dáil and government has been too silent on this humanitarian crisis. Send this email your TDs to demand action now"

Trócaire, Layer 1, Take Action

The particular crises chosen as comparative events was particularly interesting here, and it highlights a politicalising of issues on Trócaire's behalf. Both crises at Srebrenica and in Rwanda were officially designated genocide, and both were instances where public avoidance of distant crisis had directly led to prolonged suffering and devastation. In situating the lack of public awareness as a complicit factor in past genocide, Trócaire' poses a strong obligation to the website visitor to respond based on responsibility, justice and advocacy. This reflects Trócaire's Catholic Social Teaching principles, whereby a justice-based perspective of public engagement is informed by the idea of response-ability; solidarity is extended past a discourse of global compassion and based on a recognition of our own role. Here, Trócaire framed a

public engagement with the Syrian Refugee Crisis beyond donation or sympathy, prioritising instead a recognition of the public's complicity in the violence by virtue of our lack of awareness and the lack of pressure posed to our political representatives.

Similarly, the second petition on Trócaire's website was focused on lobbying the Irish government around the divestment of fossil fuels. This petition was part of a broader climate justice campaign and outlined the problem Ireland's use of fossil fuels was having on food security in the Global South. This campaign included a documentary (*The Burning Question*) and the provision of additional information about the effects of pollution and government investment in fossil fuels. The narrative surrounding this climate justice campaign drew direct connections between Global North lifestyle and Global South suffering.

"Fossil fuels are a major cause of climate change- accounting for around 60% percent of our global carbon emissions. Developing countries are feeling the impacts of climate change the most. We must stop investing in these dirty fuels and invest instead in a fair future for all"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Republic of Ireland

"I've heard that because of many smokes from industries in rich countries we have this problem. I ask them to stop it, because we are having problems. I want to say- stop it! Stop the smoke"

Trócaire, Layer 3, Climate Change in Northern Ethiopia (00.02.44)

In situating causality of Global South suffering alongside the use of fossil fuels within Global North societies, the narratives draw upon contrapuntal geographies where a deeper relational connection between the Global South and Global North was insisted upon. The narratives framing activities within this campaign render visible the connections between the lifestyle of Global North societies, and the impact suffered by a Global South 'Other'. Incorporated within this campaign, Trócaire prompted their visitor to sign a petition against Irish Government's support for investment in fossil fuels. Again, the choice to critique political investment in corporations revealed a politicalising of issues by Trócaire, in that the petition detailed and critiqued the continued investment by the government to "*some of the most polluting fossil fuel companies in the world*". In situating Ireland's investment in fossil fuels as a causal factor in climate injustices, Trócaire posed an obligation to the website visitor to advocate for a more just and fair governmental policy. This again reflected a justice-based perspective embedded in the organisation's CST principles, whereby engagement was informed by a solidarity with Global South 'Others' and a recognition of the visitor's own complicity (by virtue of their lifestyle and their government's unjust policies). In this way, Trócaire promoted a public

engagement with climate justice issues that extended beyond donation, prioritising instead a recognition of Irish complicity.

Ultimately, both campaigns activated a more justice-based connection through the narratives framing the various activities relating to each issue. As a result, there were instances of relational responsibility promoted, whereby the connections between Global North societies (and politics) were directly drawn to the suffering of Global South communities. Within these instances the website's visitor was obliged to reflect critically on their own complicity in the problem. While the motivations to respond are subjective, Trócaire's framing of such issues prioritise a public understanding that moves away from a discourse of uncritical Global North assumptions about public responsibility. Two caveats to Trócaire's promotion of public responses are important to note here, however. First, many of these activities promoted by Trócaire inherently offered the same benefits and opportunities to participants as those offered by Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern. That said, the analysis noted that the prompts through which Trócaire encouraged their public engagement activities, promoted an understanding of global issues through a lens of justice and human rights. In contrast to compassion-based and post-humanitarian messages, Trócaire's public engagement and development education were the only instances across the four case studies, where the website encouraged thicker relational connections between website visitor and Global South 'Other'. Secondly, another important caveat to Trócaire's website notes their overall tendency to expand public engagement outside that of income-generation or the promotion of the organisation. This would go on to demonstrate a key distinction between the public responsibilities constructed by Trócaire, and those constructed by the other three case studies. Thus, where websites (Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise) prioritised income-generation and organisation legitimacy objectives, discourse framing public response was dominated by compassion-based and post-humanitarian engagement. Where Trócaire demonstrated an expanded set of engagement objectives and displayed a reduced priority for income-generating priorities, the space emerged to encourage a more critical engagement and awareness with matters of global inequality and justice.

8.3 Facilitating Internet-Based Action & Mediating User Comfort

In addition to examining how responses were prompted within the websites, the analysis of how public responsibility was constructed also included a consideration of the websites' capacities to facilitate (re)actions. Such an examination considered the types of activity that

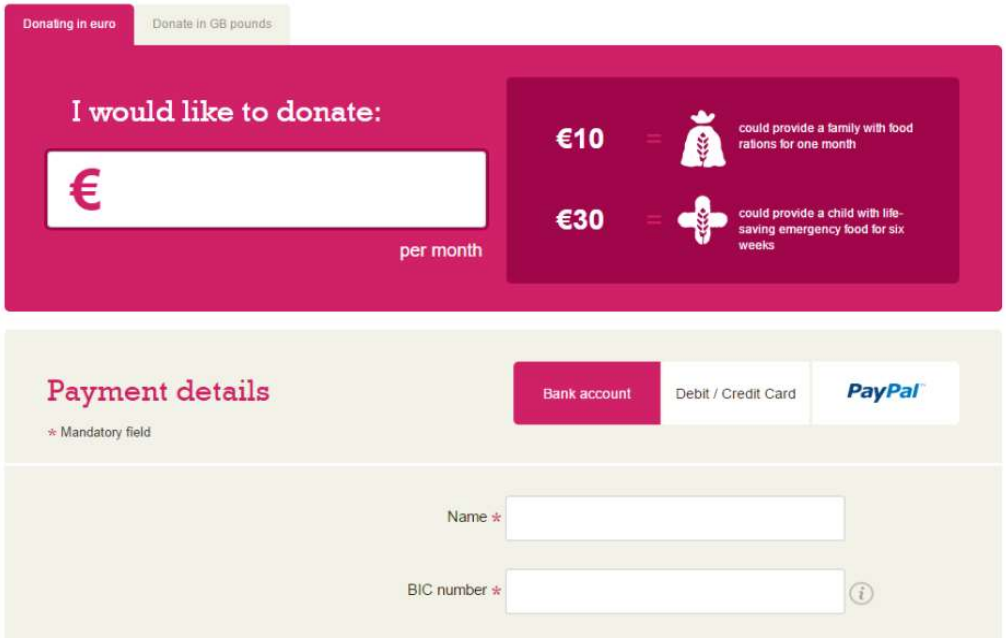
were facilitated on the websites, and the nature of engagement that such actions prioritised for the public with issues of inequality. In order to do this the research drew on discussions within digital geographies and digital activism, that highlighted the risk/cost nexus that shapes internet-based activities (Hirsh, 2014). Here, the argument states that perceived risk and cost (in terms of finance and effort) involved in different types of digital activity will influence the likelihood of participation. In the context of the NGO communication and Global North publics, this effort was considered in terms of the complexity and reflexivity involved in disrupting normative discourses embedded within dominant understandings of the Global South (Young, 2019; Hirsh, 2014). This was considered alongside another key component to public engagement with distant strangers; the role of spectatorship (Ravenscroft, 2004). This notes how engagement with distant 'Others' is informed by the mediation of distance, and more specifically the mediation of the spectator's comfort (Szorenyi, 2009). Mediating the comfort and privilege of the spectator is thought to be a key function of dominant aid and development discourse; compassion and sympathy tends to negate any ideas of relational responsibility for Global North publics for example (Andreotti, 2016; Chouliaraki, 2013). In the context of this research then, the websites' facilitated actions were considered in terms of how, or indeed if, the actions promoted a challenge of dominant entrenched Global South imaginaries. Facilitated actions that disrupted the comfortable positioning of the websites' visitors, were those that represented contrapuntal geographies and drew on thicker relational connections to the Global South 'Other'. The extent to which the websites promoted such actions diverged significantly between Trócaire and the other three case studies.

8.3.1 Donation

The facilitation of donations within all four websites did very little to trouble the uncritical and emotive engagement promoted in the initial narratives prompting donation discussed above. First, in terms of effort and usability donation webpages facilitated a relatively easy transfer of money (see Figure 8.7 below). In general, they reflected a low effort activity, in that donation pages outlined a clear and concise set of actions for the visitor. The transaction of money followed a normative transfer of details similar to online shopping, thus requiring very little effort or new skill/knowledge from the majority on the part of donors. In terms of cost, the choice of cash amounts was ultimately left at the discretion of the user themselves, however it should be noted that in the case of all four case studies additional attempts were made to influence this choice. Pencils of Promise donation pages had a standard cash amount automatically inserted into the transaction form ($500); this suggested quite a significant

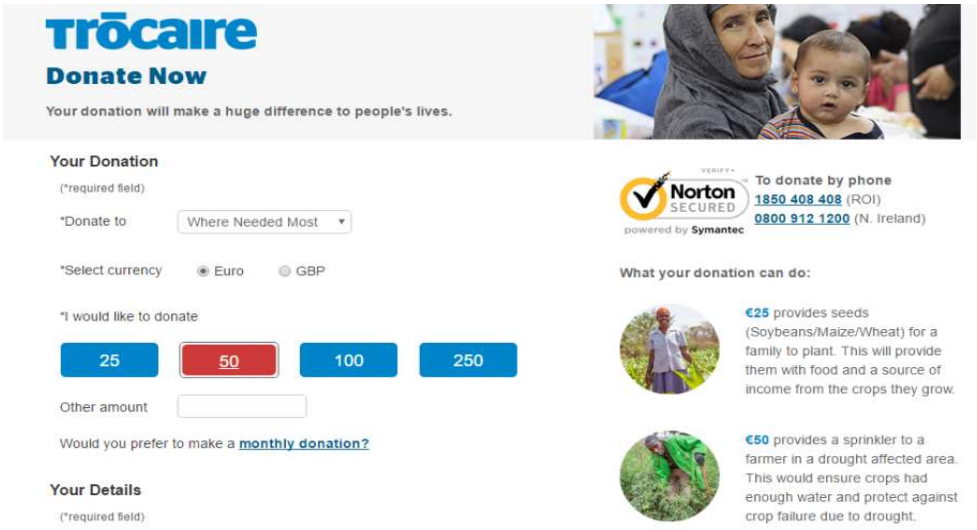
amount of money for donation. While in Concern, the donation webpage automatically provided the online form for monthly donation (i.e. once-off donation required another click from the visitor). Acumen's donation page prompted the highest range of donations between $50 and $1000, suggesting that a higher donation target by the organisation than the others. In all four websites, the organisations clearly look to demarcate a 'correct' response (or amount) for users to take.

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Donate



Concern, Layer 1, Donate

Figure 8.7 The Facilitation of Donation



Trócaire, Layer 1, Donate

Acumen, Layer 1, Donate

Figure 8.7 contd. The Facilitation of Donation

Reflecting entrenched norms that otherwise dominates NGO donation material, all four case study websites facilitated donation through logic of compassion and sympathy. Moreover, the near-immediate response implied within the design of these interactive buttons (i.e. 'Donate Now' 'Save A Child Now' 'Take Action') all contributed to a physical (albeit fleeting) expression of this compassion and concern. Thus, the webpages/buttons that facilitated the transfer of money were found to extend a reactive and simplified narrative, tied to the provision of goods;

"Your support will provide a free-telephone helpline for women and children in Gaza. €2,500 will cover the costs of this helpline for one month"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Gaza Project

"€40/£30 will facilitate two children to go to school in Lebanon for one month"

Trócaire, Layer 2, Refugee Crisis Appeal

"Support A Teacher: An effective teacher means our students are receiving high quality education"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Teacher Support

"Educate A Child"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, Scholarships

"€10 could provide a family with food rations for one month"

Concern, Layer 1, Donate

€25 a month will buy clean water for a whole village"

Concern, Layer 1, How Money is Spent

"Your donation will help build more businesses that serve the poor"

Acumen, Layer 1, Donate

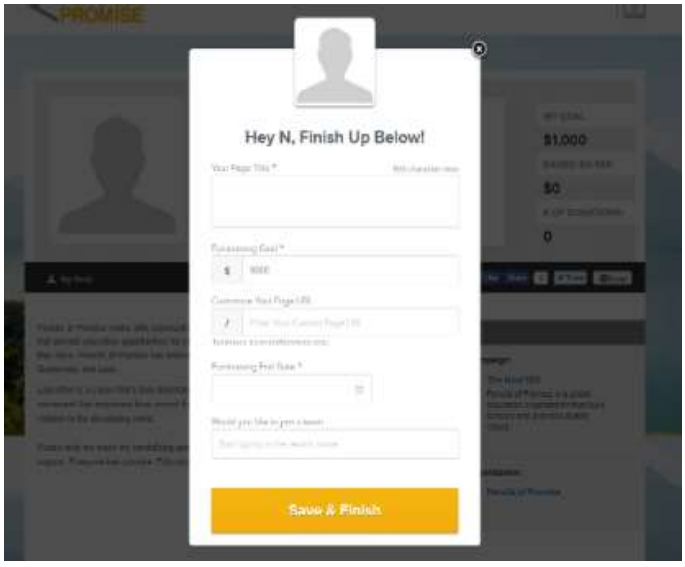
The narratives framing the facilitation of donations tied the transaction of money to a clear and tangible solution at grassroots level i.e. the provision of water, food rations, education etc. Such narratives contributed to deeply problematic donor understandings and expectations of aid and development within the websites discussed in the previous chapters (see Chapter 6 and 7). As a result, the extent that donation was prioritised and facilitated within the websites promoted a

particularly reductive framing of aid and development (for example see Concern and Pencils of Promise discussed in the Chapter 7).

In considering Szorenyi's (2009) ideas around extending the spectator's comfort, the case studies' donation narratives maintained a 'soft' uncritical construction of Global South poverty and suffering (see Chapter 6). The call-to-donate buttons in all four case study websites simply offered the website's visitor an 'active' means to extend a comfortable spectatorship role for the donor. Donation was situated in constructions of Global South deficiencies and suffering, explained through the imaginaries of Global South helplessness vulnerability, and dependency. This was as opposed to highlighting the Global North economic and geopolitical priorities that perpetuate such inequality and suffering. As noted in the section above, the narratives created a comfort and privileged 'spectator' position for the websites' donor audiences. The moral imperative to donate was situated within an uncritical, emotive plea as opposed to a confrontation of responsibility and justice. The prompts to, and facilitation of, donation within all four websites did not disrupt this framing of public responsibility, nor the soft donor expectation of NGO work.

8.3.2 FUNDRAISING

Findings from both the CDA and content analysis also demonstrated a particularly high prioritisation in Pencils of Promise's website for facilitating the registration of fundraising events; 50% of Pencils of Promise's clickable buttons facilitated the registration of fundraisers. All fundraisers for Pencils of Promise required the online registration of an event, the subsequent automated-generation of a fundraising page fulfilled two key activities for both organisation and fundraiser.



Pencils of Promise, Layer 2, Start Campaign

Figure 8.8 Pencils of Promise Facilitating the Creation of Fundraising Page

The registration and generation of a fundraiser page provided a means for Pencils of Promise to collect the money raised by fundraisers, while also allowing the individual fundraiser a means to raise their funds through online networks. Again, in terms of usability, the registration of events was a relatively straightforward process, with fundraisers required to provide their names, email address, a name of their fundraising page and a fundraising target (see Figure 8.8).

While the level of engagement with this fundraising page is subjective to the individual user, analysis noted how the set-up of such pages promoted very little engagement with either Pencils of Promise's work, or any issues pertaining to Global South education. For example, when a fundraising page is generated upon the registration of details, the page contains a default introduction to the organisation, including a generic rationalisation of why the fundraiser has gotten involved. Thus, although the default fundraiser page is written in the first person, the individual fundraiser could easily register an event without any engagement with the organisation itself. This is not to say that the fundraisers did not engage with Pencils of Promise, and the setting up of fundraising pages certainly signal a space of great potential for participants to rationalise their own connections to the work of Pencils of Promise's work. However, in terms of the action facilitated and prioritised by the website, any such engagement requires additional effort and self-motivation on the part of each individual visitor. By default, Pencils of Promise therefor facilitated a registration of fundraising events that promoted little-to-no engagement with the organisation and prioritised a relatively low-level of effort. In terms of fundraising activities themselves, while Pencils of Promise suggested offline events such has marathons or bake sales, the requirement of an online fundraiser page allows (and possibly encourages) fundraising efforts to occur entirely over digital platforms. Through the sharing of hyperlinks, the fundraiser page could be transported throughout the various social media and digital networks of the fundraiser; expanding the reach of fundraising efforts far beyond the geographical confines of offline networks. A similar registration process was facilitated by Concern, where online fundraiser pages served as a collection point for sponsorship. However, the extent to which Concern promoted such registration was comparatively lower (2% of clickable buttons facilitated registration). Instead, Concern prioritised fundraiser information pages that prompting users to participate in specific offline fundraiser events (see section 8.2.2 above).

Overall, within the websites of Pencils of Promise and Concern, the registration of fundraising events occurs without any explicit link to inequality or even the NGOs' programmes. The

process and complexity of aid and development work, the role of the NGO, and the agency of local actors are all dismissed. Similar to the facilitation of donation, the role of the websites' visitor is centralised, embedded within the ambiguous discourse of agency and transformation:

"You fundraising for this event will make a huge difference to the lives of some of the world's poorest people" Concern, Layer 2, Slieve Donard

"Make your impact: educate a child, support a teacher, build a school"

Pencils of Promise, Layer 1, About Us

Here the registration of fundraising activities are likened to active citizenship or aid work. Framed through discourses of change and transformation, the website visitor is positioned as the main protagonist in the delivery of aid and development programmes. The facilitation of registration therefore dismisses engagement with the reality of their role as fundraiser within the process an organisation's sustainability. Favouring instead an ambiguous yet comforting role for the visitor. This minimises the potential for engaging with any critical or relational engagement; neither Concern nor Pencils of Promise situated the act of registering fundraisers within the historical or geopolitical relationships between Global North and Global South. In failing to draw upon contrapuntal geographies, the facilitation of fundraising on Concern and Pencils of Promise's website did not promote any critical engagement nor relational responsibility.

8.3.3 Social Media & Downloads

In terms of the internet-based actions facilitated on Acumen's website, these prioritised the access to research and policy and the sharing of content via social media. As noted in the previous section, Acumen's website promoted activities that were underpinned by the organisation's objective of creating a support-base for their model of development. The downloading of research publications and sharing of material on social media therefore should be considered within this overarching priority. While the facilitation of publication downloads and social media sharing allowed the individual to enhance their own networks, skills and social capital, these also become resources for Acumen's engagement goals around legitimising the model and gaining support. For example, although engagement with the publications after download was completely subjective to the user's own motivations; a cursory overview of the publications available found that they were certainly orientated to a practitioner's perspective. This was reflective of an objective evident throughout Acumen's website relating to establishing a sector-based audience. Also, given the level of detail and

technical language within such publications, it was more likely that visitors who did download such material were motivated by a pre-established connection to the sector.

In terms of a more general public audience support, as opposed to a prioritisation of donation or fundraising, Acumen's website facilitated the sharing of content via social network platforms. This consisted of pre-written posts ready for visitors to share via Twitter and Facebook, these posts contained references to Acumen's organisational principles:

"We believe in choice, not charity"

Acumen, Layer 2, Our Manifesto

"Lean data addresses the unique measurable needs on social enterprises"

Acumen, Layer 2, Lean Data

Social media sharing has been found to contribute positively to a visitors identity within their own social networks, thus informs decisions for their uptake (Madianou, 2013). However, it was noted that such benefits did not explicitly form how Acumen's framed the facilitation of social media sharing. Instead the content set up for sharing was focused on Acumen's priority for promoting the organisation itself. As a result, the benefits to the organisation from sharing a social media post were more salient than a need for critical engagement into poverty, suffering and/or intervention. In this way, Acumen's facilitation of sharing content on social media or the downloading of research negated a relationship between the suffering 'Other' and the 'self'. Contrapuntal geographies were rendered completely invisible; in favour for an introspective focus on the websites' visitor and the promotion of the model for development. As a result, the participation in such activities negated any engagement with issues let alone a critical awareness of connections between Global North and inequality experienced in the Global South. Instead, the privileged position of the websites' visitor was reinforced (Szorenyi, 2009), whereby the facilitation of research downloads or social media sharing is predicated on comfort and reward. Related to this, Concern's website facilitation of downloads was far less prioritised, and they promoted visitor's comfort over critical engagement. Neither the education material made available for download, nor the substantial material dedicated to the national debate competition identified any clear motivation to engage with issues of poverty. Thus, any

potential these activities may have had for critical engagement or self-reflexivity was subjective to the visitor(s) themselves.

8.3.4 Trócaire's Downloads and Online Petitions

In addition to facilitating donations discussed above, Trócaire's website also facilitated the signing of petitions and the downloading of content for educational and research/policy purposes. By comparison to the other case study website, the discourse framing the facilitation of such actions maintained and extended upon the organisation's awareness raising agenda and justice based perspective (discussed in section 8.2.3). For example, educational and policy downloads were facilitated through the broader narrative of development education, where Trócaire targeted community leaders, teachers and practitioners enhance the engagement with global inequality and injustice (see the framing of volunteering and development education above). The use of such content offline is again subjective to each user's own motivations. Unlike Acumen however, Trócaire demonstrated a willingness to disrupt the comfort of the user, by tying the educational material to an awareness raising and advocacy agenda. The awareness raising agenda situates the visitor within broader global relations, rationalising the activities on the basis that as a Global North society the Irish public need to be more of their role within such issues and advocate for better policies. As mentioned previously, Trócaire's website also facilitated visitors to sign two online petitions as focal-points to two justice-campaigns. In terms of effort, the digital signatures required by the website signalled a low-level of effort. As Figure 8.9 demonstrates the petition only required the visitor to input their name, email address, county and constituency; the website automatically generated the relevant TD's details on the basis of this information. Following the provision of such information, a default email was automatically prepared to send.

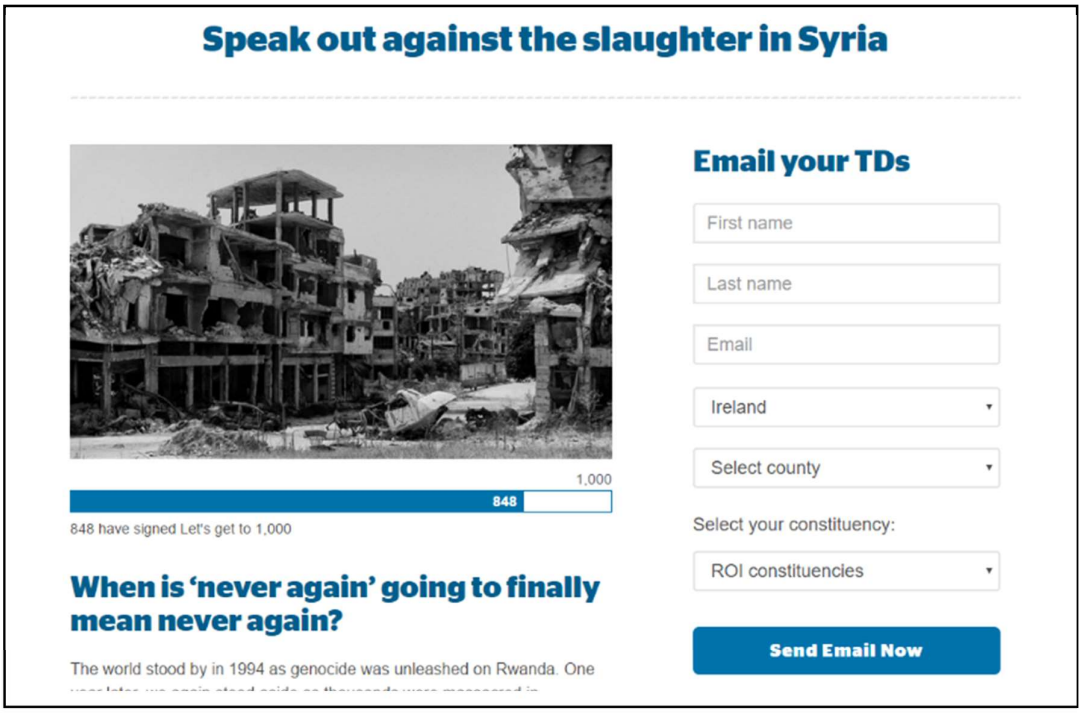


Figure 8.9 Trócaire's Syria Petition (Trócaire, Layer 1, Take Action)

The engagement-level of online petitions is subject to much debate (see Madianou, 2013; Chouliaraki, 2013). Indeed, the facilitation of Trócaire's petitioning was similar to that of Pencils of Promise's fundraising registration, in terms of the low effort required by the visitor and the capacity for quite little engagement with the issue. However, in contrast to Pencils of Promise and their facilitation of fundraising, Trócaire facilitated the signing of these petitions within a narrative that positioned the visitor in a role of responsibility and/or complicity. As discussed above, contrapuntal geographies were represented through the framing of both petitions, the digital signing of petitions only extended on this. The signing of both petitions emerged within a narrative that challenged of Global North indifference, disrupting the visitor's comfort and privilege. Narratives around these petitions looked to highlight a justice-based relationship between the suffering 'Other' and the 'self'. A performance of contrapuntal geographies was therefore evident within how Trócaire contextualised and rationalised these activities to their website's visitors.

By their very inclusion, these petitions demonstrated a priority that distinguished Trócaire from the other three case study websites; Trócaire's website situated their public engagement activities within discourses that prioritised an objective of raising awareness that was excluded

from income generation objectives and public accountability concerns. While compassion-based and post-humanitarian engagement certainly still had to potential to emerge through some of these activities, with the exception of donation Trócaire did not actively promote responses and activities within such discourses. Instead, albeit to varying extents depending on the activity, Trócaire rendered connections based on responsibility and justice visible, as opposed to providing visitors with incentives based on self-reward and benefits. Trócaire, therefore demonstrated a public engagement strategy that looked to at the very least raise awareness with issues, while often looking to challenge the websites' visitor privileged position by avoiding reinforcing comfort and reward.

8.4 Mediating Responsibility & NGO Public Engagement Objectives

Thus, in considering how the four websites promoted and facilitated public response, the analysis demonstrates a clear divergence in terms of a willingness to disrupt the comfort of their visitors. Overall, the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all mediated responses that waived any relational connection between visitor and the Global South 'Other'. Instead these three organisations demonstrated a clear prioritisation for emotive-based donation and a post-humanitarian framing of fundraising, education programmes, and community outreach (in the case of Acumen). Both the prompts framing these responses, and the websites' facilitation of them promoted connections between the visitor and 'Other' that were uncritical and fleeting. The position of the visitor was not challenged within these three websites, as their comfort was maintained. In the case of Trócaire's, the expanse of responses prompted and facilitated in the website created the space through which a range of different connections and positions were promoted for visitors. Within this space then Trócaire's website encouraged varying levels of critical global citizenship for their visitors; ranging from uncritical emotive-based donation, to a critically engaged advocacy for climate justice. As a result, the websites' capacity and willingness for producing relational responsibility, and thus promoting a more critical engaged citizenship, was mediated by the extent to which the websites' looked to maintain their users' comfort. This mediation of comfort was linked to clear pursual of the organisations' public engagement objectives.

Within the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise, the prioritisation of connections based on and/or post-humanitarian logic signal an avoidance of relational responsibility and critical engagement. An avoidance of such knowledge is reflective of broader concerns within the NGO sector regarding audience strategies of denial and difficult

knowledge (see Literature Review, section 3.6.1). First, the avoidance of disrupting the comfortable position of the website visitor demonstrates an attempt on the organisations' part, to avoid the deniability strategies used by public audiences to excuse themselves from an obligation to respond to Global South suffering. Public audiences mitigate the obligation to respond, by challenging the practicality of the proposed response, or indeed by questioning the credibility of the message (Seu, 2010). Ultimately, as noted in studies by Hoijer (2004), Scott (2014; 2015) and Seu (2010), public audiences' rejection of an obligation to respond is tied to an attempt to protect their own comfort. Secondly, this in turn reflects an earlier discussion regarding NGOs' avoidance of producing difficult knowledge for their public audiences. The disruption of comfort poses (potentially) difficult knowledge for the public, in that it challenges dominant normative understandings of public altruism and responsibility. Advocating for thicker relational connections and promoting critical engagement potentially risks deniability or rejection from the public, thereby posing a risk to donations. Thus, prompting and facilitating public responses that is predicated on disrupting the comfort of the public posed a significant challenge to Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise. Where these three organisations' showed a clear prioritisation for public engagement objectives based on income generation and public support, the mitigation of risk posed by audience deniability was particularly relevant to Acumen, Pencils of Promise and Concern.

While Trócaire's website promoted an emotive-based donation similar to the other three case studies, the website's clear prioritisation of development education, awareness campaigns, and community outreach signalled a divergence in priorities from the other websites. Across a broader range of public responses. Trócaire pursued a public engagement strategy that marginalised income-generation and/or legitimacy. Through the representation of contrapuntal geographies framing many of their public engagement activities, Trócaire's website demonstrated a construction of public response that looked to situate the visitor within global inequality and injustice issues. As a result, particularly in the instances of petitions and development education, Trócaire's framing promoted what Massey (1993, p.66) described as a "*consciousness of the links with the wider world*" for their visitors. Trócaire (with the exception of donation), therefore demonstrated a willingness to disrupt the visitors comfort; promoting relational connections that challenged their own positions within unjust global structures, unpacking the taken-for granted assumptions entrenched within dominant framings of poverty.

An insistence on relational responsibility and critical engagement posed difficult knowledge for Trócaire' as much as the other three case study organisations. A review of financial statements noted in the case of both Concern and Trócaire, the total yearly income for both organisations record significantly higher levels of restricted funding than Acumen and Pencils of Promise. In the period between 2012-2017, 80% of Concern's yearly budget was classified as restricted, while Trócaire's financial statements reflected a yearly average of 66% restricted income over the same period. Thus, public donations signal the largest available source of 'unrestricted' funding for both Concern and Trócaire organisations. On average 40% of Trócaire's entire yearly annual income has been sourced from public donation between 2012-2017. In comparison, in the same period of time, donations from the public accounted for 25% of Concern's yearly average income. This distinction between dependencies on public donation is particularly important, as it highlights that Trócaire's financial capacities are not any less dependent upon public donations when compared to the other three case studies. In fact, Trócaire's public donation accounts for a proportionally larger percentage of their unrestricted funding than any of the other three case studies. Despite this however, Trócaire's justice-based approach to public engagement held critical (difficult) knowledge as an inherent component of the website's engagement strategy. Despite Trócaire having a high dependency on public donation, it was the organisation's CST principles that impacted the expanded public engagement strategy promoted through the website. By virtue of the organisations justice-based principles, public engagement activities inherently promoted the extension of 'help' beyond compassion and sympathy. Trócaire's website therefore suggests that where public engagement priorities extend beyond income-generation or organisational legitimacy, mitigating the risk of difficult knowledge becomes a less salient driver in how public engagement is framed.

8.5 Concluding The Chapter

Trócaire's public engagement therefore was distinguished from the other three case studies, in that it demonstrated a strategy that extended beyond income-generating or promotion of organisational approach. In addition, this distinction between the four websites was underpinned by the extent that they promoted any relational responsibility or critical engagement. As a result, these findings noted that the expanse of an organisations' public engagement objectives beyond public support and/or donation, aligned with the promotion of activities that drew thicker connections between user and Global South 'Other'. In the case

studies where there was a clear prioritisation for public donation and/or organisational legitimacy, there was a subsequent avoidance of thicker relational connections. This challenges Gregory Dees' (2012) suggestion that social entrepreneurship can produce a 'better Samaritan'; both Acumen and Pencils of Promise did not prioritise critically engagement or relational responsibility for their publics within their websites. Similar to more conventional NGOs like Concern, both Acumen and Pencils of Promise both demonstrated an avoidance of critical engagement that was underpinned by donation and public support concerns. Instead, it was Trócaire (with a high dependency on public donation) who promoted a more critically engaged public responsibility; development education and community outreach activities were promoted and facilitated distinct from donation and/or legitimacy priorities.

9. TOWARDS COUNTER-GEOGRAPHIES OF AID AND DEVELOPMENT: NGO CAPACITY AND WILLINGNESS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In drawing together the discussions from the previous three chapters, this chapter highlights some key considerations regarding the capacity and willingness of NGOs to produce alternative discourse. First, the chapter summaries the prioritised public imaginaries that occurred within the case study websites, considering the organisational contexts that such imaginaries were activated under, i.e. the organisational priorities and objectives they forwarded for the organisation. Next the chapter unpacks the capacities and willingness demonstrated by the organisations in their public engagement, noting the different organisational principles that may have contributed to their production (or lack thereof) counter geographies of aid and development. Finally, this chapter closes by situating the capacity and willingness of the NGO sector within the context of broader sectoral trends impacting public engagement objectives. In doing so, this chapter aims to highlight how the opportunities and challenge for alternative public discourses of aid and development are not only dependent upon a counter-representation of distant crises, but they are entwined within the public engagement objectives that maintain a need for conventional imaginaries.

9.2 DOMINANCE OF SOFT-IMAGINARIES IN THE CASE STUDY WEBSITES

All four case study websites were found to construct soft imaginaries of poverty and crises, reflecting discourses that dominate media coverage more broadly. Such imaginaries promoted a reductive and uncritical assemblage of knowledge that framed how the website visitors would understand poverty and NGO interventions, while also shaping ideas of responses and public responsibility. Discourses around issues of global poverty prioritised a simplified engagement with causality, tying issues of inequality and injustices to grand ambiguous narratives of Global South helplessness and/or passiveness. Underpinning these narratives was the performance of hegemonic imagined geographies of the Global South, where decontextualised and dehistoricised encounters with distant people and places were promoted for the websites' public audiences. It was such discursive framings that challenged the websites' promotion of a

critically engaged public; engagement and understandings of Global South need and interventions were based on an emotive and fleeting connection, negating any relational responsibility. However, the extent that these discourses were prioritised by the case studies, and under what organisational objectives, highlights important insights for considering the capacity of organisations to produce alternative discourses.

For example, Concern and Pencils of Promise demonstrated a clear relationship between the dominance of soft imaginaries and an evident prioritisation for donor accountability and transparency. Both websites were noted to construct and prioritise imaginaries of aid and development that presented a reductive understanding of NGO work, promoting instead public imaginaries of successful and efficient interventions. The dominance of such imaginaries in both websites reflected a promotion of accountability and efficiency that framed constructions of poverty (Chapter 6) and public responsibility (Chapter 8) also. This reflects the performative power of soft imaginaries operating within the sector more broadly; whereby NGOs' accountability to the public is demonstrated through depictions of measurable success and efficiency, while context and complexity is reduced or negated completely (Powers, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Bebbington, 2004). For example, constructions of aid and development prioritised by Concern and Pencils of Promise were found to reduce public expectations that prioritised quick 'fixes' and tangible successes, this was to the detriment of engaging their publics with an understanding of preventative work (Chapter 7). Soft imaginaries of aid and development work, like those prioritised by Concern and Pencils of Promise, are therefore entwined within public engagement objectives targeting income-generation and organisational sustainability. Reflecting this, Pencils of Promise and Concern both demonstrated a high prioritisation for donation and fundraising activities within their framings of public engagement, this was at the expense of other public engagement objectives. Pencils of Promise for example did not promote any responses beyond income generation, while Concern's development education and community outreach were found to be comparatively marginalised. As a result, Concern and Pencils of Promise demonstrated how the dominance of dehistoricised and decontextualised public imaginaries are linked to a constricted public engagement strategy; where public donation objectives are prioritised over other engagement concerns.

Moreover, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all revealed a strong connection between the prioritisation of soft imaginaries, and the promotion of discourses that justified and legitimised the organisations. Soft imaginaries of poverty and public responsibility prioritised, by these three case studies in particular, marginalised the promotion of unequal and unjust

relationships that link Global North political and economic structures with global inequality issues (i.e. contrapuntal geographies were dismissed). Hegemonic representations of Global South people and place were found to reinforce dominant global power relations within the construction of poverty, causality and Global North responsibility. These narratives of poverty, intervention and public responsibility therefore reproduced paternalistic attitudes that underpin dominant media discourse. The unjust historical and geopolitical relations were marginalised, in favour for representations of Global South helplessness and dependency. As a result, the responses and understandings promoted through these websites were found to maintain the priorities and interests of Global North structures, thus legitimising the NGOs' (Global North actors themselves) and their interventions. Such discourse subsequently justifies and legitimising Global North actors as agents of interventions, including public donors and NGO practitioners. Within Acumen's website for example there was an evident promotion for engagement with material that justified their model of development, there was no attempt to promote responses beyond generating public and sectoral support for Acumen. Meanwhile Concern and Pencils of Promise websites both also marginalised any framing of public engagement or understandings that would situate their interventions within their wider geopolitical context. Concern's website embedded their interventions (and thus legitimacy and justification) within patriarchal discourses of Global South helplessness and effective interventions. The dominance of decontextualised and dehistoricised imaginaries by these three case studies demonstrated a clear prioritisation for reducing risk to public support/donation and maintaining organisational legitimacy.

9.3 Counter-Geographies of aid and Development: The Case of Trócaire

In the websites mediations of poverty, aid and development, the analysis noted Trócaire's frequent representation of contextual geographies as a key distinguishing characteristic amongst the four websites. In these representations the corporeality of Global South people and place challenged the dominant stereotypical mediations of poverty and intervention, within the other website and the media more broadly. Here, the website presented a contextually nuanced construction of poverty, while narratives of aid and development looked to highlight the context and corporeality of the Global South (if not always Trócaire's practitioners). While the contextual geographies promoted by Trócaire's website were far from complete and situated accounts of Global South poverty, in comparison to the other case studies in this

research the organisation marked a consistent and coherent attempt to disrupt dominant discourse. In this way, Trócaire was noted for having advocated for an engagement with inequality, injustice and causality that was situated within a contextually nuanced imaginary of the Global South. In addition, the analysis of Trócaire's website prioritised a framing of public responsibility that sought to highlight deeper connections between the website visitor and a Global South 'Other'. Contrapuntal geographies underpinned narratives of public engagement and the activities facilitated within the website itself. In doing so, Trócaire's website made visible the connections between 'self' and 'Other'; the comfort of the websites' visitors was not prioritised over more compassion-based registers for example in the responses prioritised by Trócaire. Trócaire's website marginalised the influence of donation and public accountability objectives, in favour for engaging their publics with responses that draw linkages between Global North structures and Global South inequality and injustice. Here, development education, community outreach and awareness campaigns all promoted contrapuntal geographies to confront the public with their own position within unequal global dynamics. Trócaire's website therefore encouraged a more critically informed public audience, where contextual and contrapuntal geographies both framed constructions of poverty, aid and development, and public responsibility.

As a result, Trócaire demonstrates how the production of counter geographies are enhanced by a willingness to expanded public engagement objectives beyond legitimacy and public support/donation. However, a caveat here relating to Trócaire's website should note the instances where soft imaginaries were activated. In the instances where the website engaged the visitor with a donation narrative, Trócaire promoted engagement and understandings of Global South need and interventions, that reflected soft and emotive narratives negating any relational connections. However, Trócaire's markedly reduced promotion of donation throughout their website saw the influence of these discourses on other narratives significantly marginalised. The expanse of Trócaire's organisational objectives evident within their website therefore highlights an important capacity to produce and prioritise counter discourses. Another caveat with Trócaire was that the level of complexity and nuance involved within Trócaire's representations of NGO work remained somewhat ambiguous at times. The way the website's visitors were engaged with the process of Trócaire's work marked an important missed opportunity. Within the context where Trócaire had demonstrated a clear willingness to provide a space for situated Global South voices within their constructions poverty and interventions, the website missed an opportunity to present the lived experience of the practitioner within a

narrative of programme delivery and/or planning. That said, in the context of what Trócaire did prioritise, the promotion of contextually nuanced discourses for their public audiences demonstrated a clear priority for challenging conventional self-serving and/or emotive responses.

Trócaire's website demonstrated a clear linkage between the dominance of counter geographies and a comparatively expanded set of public engagement objectives to the other three case studies. The website was found to construct contextually nuanced constructions of Global South poverty, that contributed to a more nuanced understanding of NGO work. Notably, these constructions were removed from a promotion of standardised efficiency or imaginaries of reactive interventions. When compared to the other three case studies, the influence of accountability and efficiency discourses were found to have marginal overall influence on narratives of intervention. Instead, much of the websites construction of Global South poverty and interventions occurred within material that displayed no other public engagement objectives other than the supply of information. For example, country profile pages and webpages pertaining to thematic programmes all demonstrated little-to-no discourse around accountability or efficiency. Moreover, webpages were also found to have a much less salient promotion of income generation, and therefore contributed to the significant reduction of soft narratives within the website. Instead, through an overtly specified objective,[10] Trócaire utilised their platform and resources to engage their website's audience with a counter-narrative of aid and development that disrupts dominant media coverage and conventional ideas of 'help'. Informed by their Catholica Social Teaching principles, Trócaire actively promoted of public responsibility contributed a counter-geographical knowledge relating to inequality and injustice, this was marked by a clear capacity and willingness on the part of the organisation to raise awareness and engage the public beyond income generation priorities. Activities pertaining to community awareness, development education advocacy and solidarity demonstrations, and petitions were all framed through a priority for increased awareness, often without any reference to donation or fundraising. Similar to O'Kane's counter narratives of atrocities of the Bosnian conflict, Trócaire's prioritisation of counter-geographies was underpinned by a willingness to avoid public engagement priorities being appropriated by

10 To raise awareness of global justice issues within the Irish public mindset: "*In Ireland, Trócaire raises awareness about the injustice of poverty and inequality through our programmes in the Irish education sector, through parish networks, and through our public campaigning and advocacy work*" (Trócaire, Layer 1, Trócaire's Work)

income-generation and accountability concerns. Thus, Trócaire construction of discourse for their public highlights the production of counter-representations by NGOs, are enhanced through a willingness promote public engagement objectives that extend beyond the confines of organisational legitimacy and the generation of public (donor) support.

9.4 Considering Capacity & Willingness

The distinctions between how and what knowledge Trócaire and the other case studies prioritised knowledge for their publics did not align to any distinct organisational capacity between the four case studies. For example, in terms of financial structures, Concern operates on a significantly higher income (€158.7 billion yearly). As noted already, over a seven year period (2012-2017) Concern's public donations have accounted for a yearly average of 25% of their income; in terms of a percentage of total yearly income, this is the lowest dependency on public donations of all the four case studies. The organisation's overall yearly average income remains almost 2.5x that of Trócaire (it's Irish counterpart). Concern was by far (theoretically) the most financially capable of pursuing an expanded set of public engagement objectives beyond donation and fundraising. In comparison, where Trócaire held a much smaller expenditure budget than Concern, their budget expenditure for public engagement activities was only €2 million less than that of Concern. This demonstrates a clear willingness on Trócaire's behalf to expand public engagement priorities beyond their financial dependencies on donations.

Meanwhile, despite a smaller yearly income than both Concern and Trócaire, Acumen displayed a significantly larger expenditure (proportionally to their total expenditure) on their public engagement objectives (on average per year 21% of total income), not including expenditure on fundraising (13% per year). Chapter 8 notes how Acumen's public outreach activities included their leadership programmes, fundraising and online classes were found to prioritise the promotion of the model, as opposed to donation or critical engagement. As such while Acumen's overall financial capacities were comparatively smaller, their larger expenditure on public engagement reflected a willingness on their part to prioritise their public support and legitimising objectives. A review of the financial statements shows that public donations have accounted for an average of 50% of Pencils of Promise total income over the course of the last seven years. As a result, the dependency on public donation is comparatively low to the other organisations; Pencils of Promise activate half of its yearly income from other

sources. In addition, Pencils of Promise was noted for having a much greater level of financial freedom than any of the other three case studies. This was by virtue of their unrestricted funding pool which amounted to a yearly average of 92% of their entire budget between 2012-2017, yet despite this enhanced financial capacity Pencils of Promise does not operationally pursue public engagement objectives beyond fundraising and donation.

In the case of Concern, in light of their massively restricted income pool (80% on average yearly is under contractual obligation), public donations marks one Concern's highest source of unrestricted income makes it a significant component to their financial structure. Thereby the reliance on soft imaginaries reflects a historical dependency of more conventional charities. Interestingly however, the reconfiguration of funding networks in Acumen and Pencils of Promise, did not have a bearing on the capacity of these organisations' to promote an alternative discourse of aid and development. Nor did it promote a more critically engaged 'Better Samaritan' donor as Gregory Dees (2012) suggested within the literature of social entrepreneurship. Despite their reconfiguration of support and their criticism of conventional charity, both Acumen and Pencils of Promise demonstrated a salient connection to the entrenched soft imaginary that dominates conventional aid and development. Instead, for example Acumen's prioritisation of public support (and legitimacy) ironically activated the 'tried and tested' soft public imaginary of aid and development. Meanwhile despite Pencils of Promise's broad (and unrestricted) funding network, their website prioritised conventional and uncritical fundraising and donation discourses as the central elements of public engagement objectives. As a result, soft imaginaries of conventional NGO discourses were promoted throughout the organisation's material, despite perhaps the greatest financial independency of all four case studies. Soft imaginaries prioritised by Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise therefore demonstrated the broader entrenched relationship between uncritical and simplified knowledge, NGO donation and legitimacy/accountability. However, as the findings of this research suggest, the dominance of such donation and accountability narratives is less tied to a dependency on the public donation for financial capacity. Instead it is demonstrative of an organisations' willingness (or lack of) to allow income-generation and accountability to be prioritised in their public engagement objectives.

While Trócaire promoted soft imaginaries in their donation narratives, the reduced priority of public donation itself in the website equated to its marginalisation in the discourse produced for the public. However, Trócaire's financial statements demonstrated a similar reliance on the public for unrestricted funding to that of Concern, thus the reduction of soft (donor) imaginaries

in Trócaire's website demonstrated a willingness to reduce the priority of public donation within their websites' objectives (as opposed to a financial capacity). Trócaire's capacity and willingness to prioritise counter geographies over more dominant mediations was not evident in any clear distinctions in their financial structure that reduced their dependency on public donation, nor was the organisation subject to any different financial regulations that altered their public accountability concerns. Instead the key defining distinction between Trócaire's organisational structure and the other three case studies was the operational willingness to avoid appropriation of their public engagement strategy by dominant discourse. This willingness can be traced to Trócaire's Catholic Social Teaching (CST) approach that provided the organisation with a justice-based approach to public engagement. Contrapuntal geographies activated through the organisation's website were reflective on this justice-based orientation of their public engagement objectives. While, Trócaire's adoption of CST was found to have little influence on the aesthetics of the content produced through the website (insofar as there was very little religious discourse or iconography noted in the analysis), the principles of CST did provide a framework of principles that explicitly extends public engagement beyond donation. For example, the fourth principle of CST 'Solidarity', calls for a self-reflexive awareness of the interdependent relationships that exist across the Global South and Global North. Trócaire's willingness to prioritise public awareness objectives beyond donation must therefore be considered within the context of this framework, whereby their core organisational principles advocate for a justice-based perspective on poverty, aid and development and public responsibility. The willingness to promote counter geographies was therefore underpinned by a promotion of a weightier relational responsibility to Global South 'Others' that is inherent within Trócaire's identity.

9.5 Willingness and Capacity: The Challenges of the Contemporary NGO Sector

The four case studies therefore provide a means for extending the discussion of NGO communication and the potential for alternative discourse beyond the subject of financial dependency. All four case studies highlight that financial capacity is a relevant but composite element of a much broader network of capacities and willingness. In considering the potential for alternative discourse through the lens of a diverse range of organisations and priorities, a critique emerges based on capacity and willingness. Such a perspective accounts for a diverse and varied series of challenges that exist within contemporary NGO sector that impact the

capacity and willingness of NGOs to produce counter-geographies (or alternative discourse more broadly). The analysis demonstrates that the public discourse produced by each of the four websites were underpinned by how the NGOs themselves understood and organised their pubic engagement priorities. This signals the profound challenge that is posed to NGOs more broadly by the production of alternative potentially disruptive discourse; there is a clear sectoral commitment to soft dominant imaginaries that shapes the capacity and willingness of NGOs to produce alternative mediations.

9.5.1 Institutional Funding

Of all the case studies, Acumen, Concern and Trócaire both demonstrated a clear organisational mandate for educating the public as part of their operational frameworks. However, (with the exception of Acumen) these organisations also demonstrated quite a low-level of expenditure on their education and engagement objectives (in comparison to their overall expenditure budgets). As an organisation's donor networks will often inform the operations of NGOs (through high levels of restricted/contracted funding), it is likely that Concern and Trócaire's approach to their public engagement priorities in mitigated through the capacity afforded to them by major funding partners. This highlights the obstructive influence major/institutional donors may have on the case studies' capacity and willingness to produce counter-representations. Reflective of this, a deficiency in institutional funding for public engagement and development education has been acknowledged in the aid and development sector. For example, in an Irish context Joint Committee Review of Irish Aid (a significant donor of both Concern and Trócaire) noted a growing unease within the Irish NGO sector around the low level of funding for public education of aid and development issues (Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs, 2018). Interestingly in the context of this chapter, the committee found that the lack of funding and the inconsistency of existing funding was found to directly impact on the prioritisation of public education (both formal and informal) throughout the sector (Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs, 2018). In consequence, the deficiency within institutional funding for public engagement objectives is sure to shape the capacity and willingness of organisations like Concern and Trócaire who activate a large proportion of their income from such sources. This lack of available funding significantly reduces a sectoral imperative to expand public engagement objectives. Yet, Trócaire's willingness and capacity to expand their public engagement priorities, was almost certainly enhanced by funding partners such as the network of Caritas organisations, who themselves share a prioritisation for awareness and education by virtue of their shared CST approach (Caritas, 2019). Moreover, as noted by (Lang)

2013 and Hilton et al. (2012), longstanding partnerships between NGOs and institutional donors are generally made on the basis that both parties have negotiated mutually beneficial objectives over time. Thus, it is not unlikely that Trócaire's longstanding partnerships with institutions such as Irish Aid and the EU are cognisant (if not financially supportive) of the organisation's approach to the public engagement. This raises important questions for a future research trajectory regarding the role that institutional donor funding may have in enhancing NGOs capacity and willingness to re-work their priorities.

9.5.2 Charity Regulation & Guidelines

Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all demonstrated a clear prioritisation of legitimacy and accountability within their public engagement objectives. As a result, the influence of charity regulation is another factor important to consider the case studies' capacity and willingness for public engagement objectives that prioritises critical understandings. Two consequences on public engagement priorities were particular evident within the case studies regarding charity regulation and guidelines. First, in both the cases of Pencils of Promise and Acumen (both based in the United States) there was a clear de-politicisation evident within the representations of poverty and how/why the both engaged their public audiences. Visitors to both websites were not encouraged to engage within global poverty issues beyond the emotive and uncritical objectives of income generation and public support priorities. This, avoidance of politics can of course be attributed to the broader unequal power dynamics that legitimise and justify interventions (see Escobar, 1995), however it may also be tied to the ambiguity of charity regulatory frameworks within the United States around political activities. The United States' ambiguous restrictions of lobbying and political activities have contributed to a 'grey area' within the context of charity public engagement (Lang, 2013). As a result, the general lack of certainty in regards charities and political activities have perpetuated a culture with American NGO sector that de-politicalises public engagement (Lang, 2013). Within such a culture, Lang (2013) notes how "*donating gets cognitively removed from engaging in debates on the politics of poverty and welfare and makes it difficult for citizens to recognise connections between politics and social problems*". In the context of the thesis this is particularly interesting to consider in terms of Acumen's education programmes that negated issues of global inequality, and where Pencils of Promise an education-focused organisation does not pursue any engagement objectives within American schools. Both American case studies were therefore situated within a sectoral culture where regulatory ambiguity has undoubtedly contributed to the depoliticalisation (and or lack of) more critically engaged public

communication priorities. In contrast, Irish charity regulation is an exception in terms of providing clarity on such matters, perhaps reflective of broader historical tendency for interlinking civil society and political advocacy (Lillis and Hogan, 2014). Regulation and guidelines clearly demarcate that public engagement activities are permitted if they relate to the purpose of the charity and do not promote political party affiliation (Charities Regulator, 2019). Thus, Trócaire's petitions to government and their critique of political policy is supported by a much clearly defined culture of political advocacy within the Irish charity sector. It is important to reiterate here however that NGOs critical engagement of publics within Irish or American societies is not specifically restricted by any regulation. The extent that organisations in both countries produce contextual and critically reflexive material for their audiences is not *regulatorily prohibited*. In both countries, the production and provision of annual reports and finances are the only legally constituted requirement placed on public engagement. However, Trócaire's critical engagement objectives undoubtedly benefitted from a clearer and open sectoral culture in comparison to Acumen and Pencils of Promise.

The second consequence however perhaps has more salient impact on public engagement priorities; charity regulation and advisory guidelines are heavily-orientated towards the transparency and accountability to donors. In Ireland for example, charity guidelines are focused upon "*increasing public trust and confidence in the management and administrations of charitable trust and organisations*" (Charities Regulator, 2019). In the United States, the New York Charities Bureau (which both Acumen and Pencils of Promise are regulated under), also orientated regulation towards the supervision of "*the activity of foundations and other charities to ensure that their funds and other property devoted to charitable purposes are properly used, and protects the public interest in charitable gifts and bequests contained in wills and trust agreements*" (Charity Bureau New York, 2019). The orientation of charity regulation, in effect institutionalises NGOs' prioritisation for accountability and transparency over other public engagement objectives. This certainly informed Concern, Acumen, and Pencils of Promise's prioritisation of accountability and legitimacy objectives.

9.5.3 Sectoral Marketisation

Moreover, both Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise were found to prioritise a post-humanitarian logic within their public engagement objectives; prompting self-beneficial responses over engagement with the Global South. In regarding capacity and willingness to produce disruptive discourses, this prioritisation of post-humanitarian messages reflect another sectoral trend regarding the growing emergence of marketing and consultancy. Within

contemporary media more broadly, the increased frequency of messages concerning distant crises are being met with growing indifference and scepticism (Richey, 2018; Richey and Chouliaraki, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2012). Within such a setting, NGOs with public support and donation priorities (like Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise) are under increasing pressure to make their discourses engaging and consumable, the role of marketing consultancy within the sector has thus grown accordingly. Both large international agencies and smaller organisations working in aid and development all share the common anxiety to increase their capacity to be heard amongst not only a crowded NGO sector, but a 24/7 multi-media landscape more generally (Richie, 2017). Such concerns have been identified as key influencing factor in the encroachment of corporate marketing in heightening the visibility of NGOs and the need for their work. In both the United States and Ireland (and the United Kingdom), flashpoints of criticism and scandal have continued to pull the NGO sector (often rightly so) under intense public and political scrutiny.

However, this has the effect of heightening the requirement of positive public-relations (PR) messages. For example, public critique cites the levels of money that organisations receive, often forging vague links between a lack of results and financial wastage or corruption within organisations. The contemporary NGO sectors in the US and Ireland are both becoming increasingly characterised by their anxiety to allay such perceptions of inefficiency and malpractice. Targeting key public misconceptions and criticisms, NGOs are being encouraged by advisory and PR agencies to drive a public engagement strategy that demonstrates trustworthiness and effectiveness in a simplified and consumable way. A simple demonstration of this, is the extent to which leading international development networks are encouraging their members with this advice; BOND UK, a British-based network for organisations working in development advises NGO communicators to "*keep engagement simple and show tangible impacts*". Their counterpart in Ireland, Dóchas advises their network of NGOs that their public attitudes surveys show "*the charitable organisations are providing the right amount of information, it is trusted and people would support those organisations that show they are making an impact*" (Dóchas, 2017). While InterAction, an American network advises NGOs to take "*proactive measures to establish relationships, build trust and promote information about what organisations are doing*" (InterAction, 2018). As a result, the case studies are operating within sector trends that are increasingly dictating communication strategies that frame public engagement to demonstrations of efficiency and trustworthiness. The obstructive

impact of this on the production of critical and contextually nuanced public discourses was evident in the narratives promoted by Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise.

9.6 Concluding The Chapter

In drawing together the findings of the previous three chapters, the core argument of this research suggests that the production of alternative representations by NGOs, are constrained through the dependency on decontextualised imaginaries focused on maintaining public donation and/or support and organisational legitimacy. Yet, the organisations at the focus of this research note how such dependency is not tied to any clear financial capacities. Of all the four case studies, Trócaire's websites demonstrated that the capabilities to produce critical and contextual public discourse are dependent on a willingness to expand public engagement objectives. Organisational legitimacy and donation objectives are reduced, and they operate alongside the more salient justice-based framing of public responsibility in an expanded public communication strategy. The case studies therefore demonstrate that NGOs' capacity to produce counter discourses of aid and development are redundant if they are no maintained by a willingness to engage the public beyond objectives of donation and organisation legitimacy. In doing so, the enhancement of an organisation's capacity and willingness not only requires the production of counter-representations, but also depends upon a reworking of the public engagement priorities that maintain the need for conventional imaginaries.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 FINDINGS & CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The central aim of this thesis looked to examine the opportunities and challenges posed by and to each case study NGO, in the production of critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses. The research objectives undertaken in this endeavour focused on four case study websites, considering what discourses each organisation promoted for the public while examining the presence (or not) of counter-geographical knowledge. In addition, this PhD research outlined a working methodological framework for managing and examining the discursive capacities of websites (Chapter 5). Analysis focused on the construction of poverty (Chapter 6), aid and development (Chapter 7), and public responsibility (Chapter 8), considering priorities and power relations that frame each organisations' public engagement.

Overall, this thesis found that the production of more critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses is best suited by a re-framing of NGO public engagement principles. Yet, the range of organisational approaches holding focus throughout this thesis indicated that such capacities were not reflective of any distinctions in the organisations' financial dependency on the public. This was significant with regards the traditional critique of NGO communication, where discussions of dominant uncritical public imaginaries is often framed upon the sector's dependence on donations. The findings from this research however highlights the empirical value that a recognition of the sector's diversity and variance provides to such considerations. Here, the thesis extends on critiques offered by Powers (2018), Dogra (2014) and Chouliaraki (2013; 2006) on NGO construction of public imaginaries. In considering NGO communication through a wide range of different (and often conflicting) priorities and structures, this research unpacked a series of contexts and principles that pose opportunities and principles to critically engaging the public. The findings emerging from this thesis and their significance can be summarised as follows:

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: THE CONSTRUCTION OF GLOBAL SOUTH POVERTY, SUFFERING AND CRISIS

Analysis of the four case study websites found that the construction of poverty, suffering and crisis in the Global South emerged through two frames (Chapter 6). First, in the websites of Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise, narratives of poverty promoted decontextualised and dehistoricised knowledge around causality and suffering. Here, all three of these websites

prioritised representations of people and place that perpetuated imaginaries of Global South helplessness and passiveness. As a result, these geographical representations constructed understandings of complex issues (relating to global inequalities, injustices and humanitarian crises) that were rooted in uncritical and over-implied narratives of lacks and deficiencies. This knowledge reflected Andreotti's (2006) soft understandings, whereby global citizenship is dominated by the production of and engagement with simplified and uncritical knowledge of poverty. On the other hand, Trócaire's website prioritised a more contextually nuanced representation of the Global South people and place. As a direct result of this, Trócaire's constructions of Global South poverty promoted a more nuanced understanding of suffering and causality for the public throughout their website. Within Trócaire's website poverty was framed by and within regional contexts, and often represented through the words of those experiencing the suffering. Thus, a key distinction between the construction of poverty across the four case study websites was Trócaire's prioritisation of counter-geographical knowledge (Gregory, 2005) that contextualised issues of Global South poverty.

Moreover, the dominance of uncritical constructions of Global South poverty within the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise, was underpinned by a clear prioritisation of donation and public support. These findings reflected an entrenched relationship between the production of uncritical public imaginaries and the prioritisation of donation and public support. Where Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise prioritised reductive constructions of poverty, there was a clear promotion of donation and public support objectives. This was in contrast Trócaire's website, where the prioritisation of a contextual construction of poverty emerged through content that demonstrated a comparatively reduced promotion of donation or public support objectives in the website.

Such constructions of poverty promoted by the four websites broadly reflected existing research; the prioritisation of decontextualised and uncritical public imaginaries by NGOs are underpinned by organisational objectives focused on ensuring public (donor) support and legitimising their own intervention. Researchers (see Banks, Hulmes and Edwards, 2018; Dogra, 2014, Chouliaraki, 2006 for example) have directly linked the production of uncritical and reductive narratives of Global South suffering to the public donation priorities of NGOs. For example, NGOs' donation campaigns and development education material have been subjected to a sustained critique linking the reproduction of stereotypical representations with public engagement objectives that prioritise donation and support for the NGO itself (Power, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Henderson and O'Neill, 2011; Manzo, 2006). Here, the findings of this

PhD thesis substantiated such critiques whereby the production of soft constructions of poverty were embedded within donation and public support objectives in all four case studies.

However, a significant distinction emerged on the basis of how these objectives were prioritised across the four case studies, and thus extended existing critiques (for example: Power, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Henderson and O'Neill, 2011; Manzo, 2006). The marginalisation of donation objectives and discourses throughout Trócaire's website did not reflect any reduced financial dependency on public donation, especially when compared to the other three case studies. Moreover, despite the claims in social entrepreneurship literature (see Kickul, et al., 2018; Santos, 2015; Dees, 2012), an advocacy for local context was not reflected in how the websites of Acumen and Pencils of Promise framed their constructions of Global South poverty. This raises important consequences regarding future considerations around NGOs production of alternative public discourses. The findings suggest that contextual framing of Global South poverty was informed by Trócaire's *willingness* to expand public engagement objectives beyond the confines of donation and public support. Thus, future research and policy planning focusing on critical public engagement must consider this element of organisational willingness. These findings suggest there is huge potential in research that considers the role researchers and institutional funders in particular can play in enhancing the capacity and willingness of NGOs to produce more critically engaging public discourses.

Research Objective 2. Construction of Aid and Development

Analysis of the websites' construction of aid and development (Chapter 7) demonstrated how all four case study websites constructed reductive public imaginaries of their work, that marginalised or negated the complexity and corporeality of NGO practitioners. However, the case studies diverged with regards the extent that such imaginaries of the Global South informed public expectations of aid and development. As a result of decontextualised representations of the Global South, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all used their online presence to prioritise a problematic imaginary of what aid and development work looks like. All three websites promoted a narrative of NGO work that prioritised the successful and efficient provision of resources (goods and/or services). Representations of aid and development work within these three case study NGOs also reflected a clear priority for demonstrating the success and legitimacy of the organisations' interventions to the websites' visitors. However, the understandings of interventions promoted within these representations were decontextualised and simplified, negating the complexity and nuance of impact and success. In contrast, Trócaire's promotion of contextual framing of aid and development

programmes contributed to a more nuanced understanding of their work. Contextual geographies highlighted the multi-scalar nature of Trócaire's programmes; local voices and depictions of community capacities informed situated representations of aid and development interventions. As a result, across the four case study websites, it was donor accountability and organisational legitimacy that informed an important distinction between the organisations' construction of aid and development. The websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all promoted constructions of intervention that prioritised a demonstration donor accountability, efficiency and legitimacy.

The case studies' construction of aid and development imaginaries highlighted an important note often missing from existing critique, particularly with regards disrupting the embedded nature of accountability within NGO communication. The influence of donor accountability and organisational legitimacy on NGO knowledge production has been highlighted extensively throughout existing research of NGO communication (see Banks, Hulmes and Edwards, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Bebbington, 2004; Fowler, 2002). The construction of uncritical and simplified interventionist narratives function as means for NGOs to demonstrate the efficient spending of public donations, while the depiction of post-intervention success serves as a way for organisations to legitimise their role (Dogra, 2014; Bebbington, 2004). The promotion of these dominant public imaginaries was evident in the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise in particular. Soft imaginaries of aid and development emerged through the prioritised discourses of donor accountability and organisational legitimacy in all three of these case studies. Imaginaries therefore promoted public expectations of their work that prioritised success, transparency and efficiency. This occurred despite the complex and contextualised underpinnings of these organisations' interventions at grassroots.

However, importantly the findings here also noted how discourses of public accountability and efficiency were comparatively marginal within Trócaire's framing of interventions when compared to the other three case studies. When compared to Trócaire, the prioritisation of accountability across websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise again was not reflective of any greater accountability to public donors or any more stringent regulatory context. Moreover, the reconfiguration of support networks demonstrated by Acumen and Pencils of Promise (see Chapter 2) did not alter/re-orientate the influence of accountability and efficiency on their constructions of aid and development. Thus, the findings here provided an important note with regards disrupting the embedded nature of accountability within NGO communication. Trócaire's promotion of a more nuanced construction of intervention (albeit

not always a comprehensive account of Trócaire's own role), emerged in their website where donor accountability and/or organisational efficiency was comparatively minimal. This occurred despite Trócaire's dependency on quite traditional sources of support including a significant reliance on public donation, as well as existing in the same regulatory framework as Concern.

As a result, the findings here suggest that an NGO's capacity to reduce the influence of accountability priorities in their public engagement material is not tied to any specific re-working of networks of dependency nor regulation requirements. Instead, the construction of contextually nuanced imaginaries of aid and development is determined by an organisation's willingness to re-work how accountability objectives are incorporated into their public engagement strategy. This research highlights that there is great potential for critical public engagement where an organisation demonstrates a willingness to reduce the salience of their accountability and transparency objectives. Thus, a future research trajectory that focuses on enhancing organisations' willingness and capacity to re-organise their accountability objectives is required. There is a particularly important onus for charity regulators to reflect upon their role in contributing to a sectoral anxiety around transparency and accountability that impacts negatively on NGO public engagement goals. Future research trajectories must include a focus on the influencing role that charity regulatory bodies can play in helping re-orientate public accountability.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

With regards the construction of public responses and responsibility, the findings discussed in Chapter 8 demonstrate how the four case study websites diverged in terms of their willingness to disrupt the comfort of their visitors. The responses prompted and facilitated in the websites of Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all negated relational connections between the visitor and the Global South. Responses prioritised within these three websites were limited to emotive-based donation and fundraising, while education and community outreach activities were underpinned by a post-humanitarian logic of self-appropriation. Through the discursive construction of these activities, Acumen, Concern and Pencils of Promise all demonstrated a prioritisation for engagement that was uncritical and fleeting. Thus, these websites promoted a construction of public responsibility that maintained the comfort and privilege of the websites' visitors. In contrast to this, Trócaire's website was found to promote a significantly broader

range of responses, from donation to attending solidarity marches. Across this expanded public engagement strategy, Trócaire's website provided visitors with a wide range of different engagement levels. Engagement ranged from donation framed through uncritical emotive narratives of Global South need, to activities that advocated for greater relational responsibility in public responses to climate justice and refugee rights.

This distinction between Trócaire's construction of public responsibility and the other three case studies is significant to future research considerations on NGOs critical engagement of their publics. Existing literature (see Kyriakidou, 2016; Seu, 2010; Höijer, 2004) has noted that NGOs' avoidance of disrupting the comfort of their public supporters is tied to a risk of deniability and a subsequent loss of public (donor) support. This is on the basis that disrupting dominant normative understandings of public responsibility can force public audiences to excuse themselves from responding (Seu, 2010), thus posing a risk to an NGOs legitimacy and funding. As a result, the literature suggests than an NGOs capacity or willingness to produce critical knowledge for their public is obstructed by virtue of their reliance on public donor relationships (Banks, Hulmes, and Edwards, 2018; Dogra, 2014; Fowler, 2002). However, the findings of this research highlight an important caveat to such considerations, specifically regarding the risk posed to an organisation's public support by the production of critical (difficult) knowledge.

The websites of Concern, Acumen and Pencils of Promise all demonstrated a clear avoidance of critical knowledge for their public supporters. This avoidance shaped organisation of their public engagement priorities, as opposed to any greater dependency on the public for donation. For example, the reconfiguration of support networks activated by Acumen and Pencils of Promise, and the enhanced financial budget of Concern, did not challenge the prioritisation of uncritical public engagement objectives by these three organisations. Instead, Trócaire's Catholic Social Teaching principles demonstrated a distinct commitment to engaging the Irish public with issues of global poverty. Crucially, Trócaire's extended public engagement strategy was not reflective of any enhanced financial capacity when compared to the other case studies. Thus, the organisation demonstrated that the capacity to disrupt a public's comfort is enhanced by a willingness to expand the range of activities and engagement promoted for the public. This again highlights an important factor for future research and programme planning; what are the internal and external trends that influence such willingness within NGOs. Here, there is an incredibly important perspective to be gained not only from NGOs, but public audiences also. For example, future research should look to unpack the internal operations that influence

the creation and organisation of NGO public engagement goals. While the multiple and diverse perspectives to gained from public audiences and their reception of different types of messages is also deeply important for future considerations around alternative public discourse.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4: ESTABLISH A METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK THAT RESPONDS TO THE DISCURSIVE AND PERFORMATIVE POWER WITHIN ONLINE AND NGO COMMUNICATION.

Finally, this thesis also outlined a working methodological framework for managing and critically analysing a website's discursive capacities, thus responding to the fourth and final research objective (Chapter 4 & 5). The archiving of the four websites provided a theoretically informed framework to manage and organise the websites' volume of content and interactivity. While the process of archiving required quite a substantial timeframe to complete, the process provided an important opportunity for data immersion. This data immersion proved invaluable to both the formation of a working analytical framework while also providing important empirical insights.

Furthermore, informed by a postcolonial critique of dominant NGO discourses, the analytical framework adopted here was created to consider how discourses of poverty, intervention and public responsibility were constructed through the online websites of four NGOs. The analytical framework created for the case study websites also provides a working method for examining how power relations and identities within the NGO sector manifest discursively through digital platforms. This was informed through the incorporation of key theoretical principles relating to discourse (Foucault, 1972; 1970), web design (Ash, Page and McGinty, 2012; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006) and web interactivity (Adami, 2015). The application this adapted critical discourse analysis framework to the four websites highlighted the various priorities and relationships that shape organisational capacity and willingness to construct alternative understandings for the public. In doing so, this research also contributes a working methodology for critically examining discourse and power on, within and between digital platforms that can be applied to a multitude of different contexts.

10.2 A FUTURE RESEARCH TRAJECTORY

Ultimately, the findings of this research extend considerations on an entrenched relationship evident more broadly in the literature on NGO communication (see Chapter 3). NGO prioritisation of decontextualised and uncritical public imaginaries is considered a function of specific organisational priorities, and these are largely tied to sustaining their legitimacy and public support and/or donations (Chouliaraki, 2013; Dogra, 2014). However, this thesis highlights important implications for considering this public imaginary/organisational legacy

relationship in future research of NGO communication. Across the range of different organisational principles and structures subject to analysis, this research showed it was an NGO's organisation of public engagement objectives that proved a key determinant of their capacity to disrupt dominant public imaginaries. It was a willingness (or lack thereof) of the case studies to expand and re-frame their public engagement objectives beyond donation and legitimacy concerns, that informed their capacity to produce critically engaged and contextually nuanced public discourses. Thus, the central argument of this research holds that an alternative discourse of distant crises and suffering not only requires a counter-representation, but it also necessitates a re-orientation of the public engagement priorities that conventional imaginaries sustain. This raises important implications for future considerations regarding how the capacity and willingness of NGOs can be enhanced, so as to engage their publics with critically engaging and contextually nuanced understandings. Themes emerging from this thesis for future research therefore include:

THE MEDIATION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES WITHIN A DIVERSIFYING AND EXPANDING CONTEMPORARY AID AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR.

The NGOs chosen for this research represented only a snapshot of the diverse range of organisational structures and principles that characterise the contemporary NGO sector. Yet even amongst its limited range of four case study NGOs, this thesis highlighted a range of divergences and distinctions that were shown to impact how each organisation promoted knowledge for their publics differently. In doing so, the findings that emerged between the case study organisations extended considerations within the traditional critique of NGO communications (and indeed mediated aid and development representations more broadly). Future research needs to examine NGO communication across a wider and more varied range of different organisations. Existing research on NGO public communication, focuses its critique on the obstructive relationship between uncritical public imaginaries within NGO material and their relationship to donation, legitimacy and legacy. However, such critiques are largely confined to a hegemonic framing of the principles and structures that define an NGO. This PhD research points towards the empirical value offered by an examination of the different organisational principles and objectives that influence NGOs' production of knowledge for publics. Expanding this analytical focus across a broader range of organisations, would identify more opportunities and challenges facing the contemporary NGO sector and the critical engagement of their publics.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO APPROACHING A MORE CRITICALLY ENGAGED PUBLIC: A VIEW FROM THE AID AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR.

In its considerations of the case studies' production of knowledge, this research considered the influence of sectoral trends through quite a broad and abstract lens. Using insights from the literature and existing research, key sectoral trends were identified including institutional funding, marketisation of the sector and charity regulation. These trends were broadly considered in terms of the impact they may have had on the knowledge produced by the case studies (Chapter 9). Future research could therefore further unpack the specific implications these trends have on NGOs' capacity and willingness to produce critically engaging knowledge for the public. Moreover, this type of research would benefit significantly from an organisation-based analysis; analysis informed by an organisational perspective would identify key operational opportunities and challenges posed to NGOs by the production of critically engaging discourses for the public. For example, in the context of the four case studies at the focus of this research, an organisational perspective would extend discussion around the operational advantages and challenges confronted by Trócaire in their expansion of public engagement objectives beyond donation/accountability. Such a perspective would provide vital empirical value to any future considerations on NGO communication, particularly with regards how NGOs' capacity and willingness might be enhanced to produce alternative public discourse. There is important insights to be gained, for both the NGO sector itself and academia, in research that examines the production of critically engaging public discourse from the perspective of NGOs.

THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO APPROACHING A MORE CRITICALLY ENGAGED PUBLIC: AN AUDIENCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE.

Another important avenue for future research emerging from this thesis relates to the suitability and practicality of a critical engaged public audience in the context of NGOs. As this PhD research highlights, the promotion of critically engaging public discourse was constrained by a powerful and established approach to public engagement. The central research aim of this thesis was orientated around the insistence that NGOs play a greater role in producing better representations, moving towards a more critically engaged public. However, more research is required with regards understanding what such a shift in public engagement might mean for the NGO sector. In particular, research is required on the consequences that alternative NGO discourses may have on a general public audience that is familiar with uncritical and reductive understandings. For example, public engagement with aid and development that is critically reflexive may not be conducive to disaster relief or emergency aid; this highlights a cautious

note in calls for alternative discourses that dismiss the practices of conventional NGO discourse. Vital life-saving resources are made possible by traditional structures of aid representations through a reactive donor-public, and therefore cannot (and should not) be entirely replaced. Audience-based research can provide a greater understanding around what impact (positive and negative) the production of critically engaged public discourses might have for NGO support. Existing audience-based research has often narrowed a focus on specific aesthetic tropes, particularly suffering imagery (Kyriakidou, 2016; Scott, 2015; Höijer, 2004). Existing research therefore does not provide an insight into how NGOs' publics might respond to alternative (potentially disruptive) knowledge. An audience-based research could examine how different publics respond to more contextually nuanced discourses within NGO material, this could provide important insights into any risk posed to NGOs by such discourse.

Moreover, an examination of audience-response to contextually nuanced discourse would also highlight the types of audience-groups most receptive to alternative discourses. An audience-based analysis could also focus on public response to critically engaging material produced under different priorities (i.e. donation pleas, education, awareness campaigns). This would provide important insight into the contexts in which NGO public audiences are more open to engage with alternative discourse. This would provide a greater understanding for practitioners and academics with regards the risks of critical knowledge to NGOs, while perhaps highlighting spaces where funding agencies and NGOs themselves might move resources towards the production of more critically engaged publics.

10.3 Closing Statements

This thesis highlights that a profound shift in aid and development thinking is required to engage a critically reflexive public and encourage more relational responses to mediations of poverty. A process of disruption is required that includes an alternative discourse, while simultaneously re-working the principles that dominant uncritical (soft) public imaginaries maintain. As this thesis has demonstrated, soft imaginaries not only inform public understandings and expectations, but also frame how legitimisation of intervention and the NGO itself become aligned with quick reactive assumptions of aid and development work. Thus, the human geographies surrounding Global South poverty and humanitarian events need to be reactivated, depicting both the complexities and intricacies of (relational) global relationships with the experience of distant suffering. As Trócaire's website highlights, implicit within this reactivation is a disruption of public expectations by and through counter-geographies of aid and development. Moreover, as the distinctions between Trócaire and

Acumen demonstrate, it is important to note that alternative discourses are not simply exclusive nor guaranteed by alternative approaches.

This thesis has shown that challenging the hegemonic can happen from within the "belly of the beast" (Kapoor, 2004, p. 640); the aid and development sector is not as hostile to change and innovation as the soft imaginary that defines it would have us believe. Though there is much research exploring contemporary practice within the NGO sector, there remains a dearth of work identifying where NGO capacity and willingness can be enhanced to mediate a more critically engaged public discourse of aid and development. Counter-geographies of aid and development do not require a complete carte blanche of new practices, and care should be taken for calls along such lines in the context of aid work in particular. Ultimately, mediated representations can be distinguished from conventional hegemonic practices through an insistence on a more human(e) geography, fuelled by the capability and willingness of a critically engaged and relational responsibility.

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Appendix A

List of Financial Reports and Financial Statements used for Review of Case Studies Finances

Trócaire (2013) *Trócaire Annual Report 2012-13.* Available Online: https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/whatwedo/Trocaire-Annual-Report-2012-2013-Final.pdf [Accessed May 17 2018].

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Appendix B

LIST OF WEBPAGES SAMPLED FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE WEBSITES

CONCERN

[Accessed October 25-November 26 2016]

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink
Home Layer		
'Home'		https://www.concern.net/
Layer 1		
Donate	TV Appeal	http://concern-2.hs-sites.com/tv-appeal
Concern's Everyday Humanitarians	Concern's Everyday Humanitarian	http://blog.concern.net/concerns-everyday-humanitarians
About Concern	About Concern	https://www.concern.net/about
Where We Work	Where We Work	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work
Get Involved	Get Involved	https://www.concern.net/get-involved
How To Help	Donate Today	https://www.concern.net/checkout/4206902
Resources	Resources	https://www.concern.net/resources
Donate	Donate	https://www.concern.net/checkout/4206902?amount=
Take Part In An Event	Take Part In An Event	https://yourconcern.concern.net/events/
Nyakuma	Nayakuma	http://blog.concern.net/
How Is Money Spent	How Is Your Money Spent	https://www.concern.net/about/how-money-spent
Testimonials	Testimonials	https://www.concern.net/about/testimonials
Hunger	Hunger	https://www.concern.net/category/project/hunger
Emergencies	Emergencies	https://www.concern.net/about/our-programmes/emergencies
Health	Health	https://www.concern.net/about/our-programmes/health

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink	
Layer 2			
Malawi		*https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/malawi*	
Show Solidarity	Women of Concern	https://www.concern.net/donate/making-major-donation/women-of-concern	
Slieve Donard	Slieve Donard	https://yourconcern.concern.net/events/climb-4-concern-sliabh-donard	
Charity Transparency	Charity Transparency	https://www.concern.net/about/transparency	
Secondary School	Secondary School Resources	https://www.concern.net/get-involved/schools/resources	
Beliefs	Concern's Beliefs	https://www.concern.net/about/concerns-beliefs	
Partners	Institutional Donors & Partners	https://www.concern.net/about/how-we-raise-money/institutional-donors	
Open Information	Open Information Approach	https://www.concern.net/about/open-information-approach	
Rwanda	Rwanda	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/rwanda	
Syria	Syria	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/middle-east/syria	
I Want To Debate	Debates	https://www.concern.net/get-involved-debates	
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/sierra-leone	
Kilimanjaro	Climb Kilimanjaro	https://yourconcern.concern.net/events/climb-kilimanjaro-2016	
Bangladesh	Bangladesh	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/asia/bangladesh	
Start Fundraiser	Register	https://yourconcern.concern.net/register	
Layer 3			
Campaign With Us	Campaign With Us	https://www.concern.net/get-involved/campaign-with-us	
Lebanon	Lebanon	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/middle-east/lebanon	
We Are Concern		Video	
Institutional Donors	Institutional Donors	https://www.concern.net/about/how-we-raise-money/institutional-donors	
Funding Sources	Annual Reports	https://www.concern.net/about/annual-reports	
What We Do	About Us	https://www.concern.net/about	
Volunteer	Jobs & Volunteering	https://www.concern.net/jobs-and-volunteering-opportunities	
Mozambique	Mozambique	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/mozambique	
Social Protection	Social Protection	https://www.concern.net/about/our-programmes/livelihoods/socialprotection	
Conservation Farming	Conservation Farming	https://www.concern.net/news-blogs/concern-blog/all-about-concervationfarming	
Floods in Southern Africa	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awCESwVPKWs	February 15 2015 Concern Worldwide

Liberia	Liberia	https://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/liberia	
Importance of Women Farmers	Women Who Farm	http://blog.concern.net/women-who-farm-are-more-important-than-you-know	
Conservation Agriculture	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvjAXTe5Ec4	August 14 2015 Concern Worldwide

PENCILS OF PROMISE

[Accessed December 1 2016- January 19 2017]

Archive Label	**Page Title**	**Hyperlink**
Home Layer		
'Home'		https://pencilsofpromise.org/
Layer 1		
Leadership Councils	Leadership Councils	https://pencilsofpromise.org/take-action/leadership-councils/
About Us	About Us	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/
Financials	Our Financials	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/financials/
Partners	Our Partners	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/partners/
Shop	PoP Shop	http://pencilsofpromise-2.myshopify.com/
Donate	Donate	https://pencilsofpromise.org/donate/
Teacher Support	Teacher Support	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/teacher-support/
Get Creative	Get Creative	https://pencilsofpromise.org/get-started/
Mayer	Mayer's Fundraiser	https://fundraise.pencilsofpromise.org/fundraise?fcid=487526
Events	Events	https://pencilsofpromise.org/take-action/events/
What We Have Done	Results and Innovations	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/results-innovation/
Scholarships	Scholarships	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/scholarships/
Founding Story	Our Founding Story	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/founders-story/
Our People	Our People	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/people/
Jobs	Jobs	https://pencilsofpromise.org/about/jobs/

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink
Layer 2		
Buy The Book	The PoP Book	*https://pencilsofpromise.org/popbook/*
Invest Monthly	Monthly Donation	https://fundraise.pencilsofpromise.org/checkout/donation?eid=37197&utm_source=top-
Keep A Child Healthy	Donate	https://pencilsofpromise.org/donate/?amount=100
No 1 Teacher (Video)	(Embedded Video)	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/teacher-support/
Chicago	Chicago Team	https://fundraise.pencilsofpromise.org/fundraise/team?ftid=5875
Guatemala	Guatemala	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/guatemala/
How Will You Build the Next One	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyrMELnQr8Q Nov. 15 2013 Pencils of Promise
Destination of Your Dollars	Results & Innovation (Panel)	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/results-innovation/
Laos	Laos	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/laos/
Passport	Passport	https://pencilsofpromise.org/passport/
PoP Clubs	PoP Clubs	https://pencilsofpromise.org/take-action/clubs/
WASH	WASH	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/wash/
Read Their Story	PoP Indiana	https://medium.com/@PencilsOfPromise/anna-tobias-pop-indy-
Start Campaign	Get Started	https://pencilsofpromise.org/get-started/
New York City	New York Fundraising Team	https://fundraise.pencilsofpromise.org/fundraise/team?ftid=25105
Layer 3		
Innovation (Interactive Panel)	Results & Innovation	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/results-innovation/
School Builds	School Builds	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/school-builds/
Dallas	Dallas Fundraising Team	https://fundraise.pencilsofpromise.org/fundraise/team?ftid=24342
Educate A Child	Donate	https://pencilsofpromise.org/donate/?amount=250
Get Started	Register You Fundraiser	https://pencilsofpromise.org/get-started/
Ghana	Ghana	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/ghana/
Learn More	The PoP Gala	http://gala.pencilsofpromise.org/
View Photos (Interactive Panel)	School Builds	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/school-builds/
Nicaragua	Nicaragua	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/nicaragua/
Support A Teacher	Donate	https://pencilsofpromise.org/donate/?amount=500

Annual Report	Annual Report	https://pencilsofpromise.org/annual-report/
Melvis & Rob	Meet Melvis & Rob	https://medium.com/best-in-class-featured-fundraisers/meet-melvis-langyintuo-
Learn More	The Issue	https://pencilsofpromise.org/programs/the-issue/
Take Action	Take Action	https://pencilsofpromise.org/take-action/

TRÓCAIRE

[Accessed January 24- March 14 2017]

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink	
Home Layer			
'Home'		https://www.trocaire.org/	
Layer 1			
Take Action	Speak Out on Syria	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/speak-out-on-syria	
Donate	Donate	https://www.trocaire.org/donate/make-a-donation?currency=EUR	
Current Vacancies	Work With Trócaire	https://www.trocaire.org/about/work-with-trocaire	
Trócaire's Work	What We Do	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo	
Where We Work	Where We Work	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework	
Accountability	Accountability	https://www.trocaire.org/about/accountability	
Culture Night	Culture Night 2016	https://www.trocaire.org/blogs/culture-night-2016	
How We Work	How We Work	https://www.trocaire.org/about/how-we-work	
Finances	Our Finances	https://www.trocaire.org/about/finances	
Irish Grant Scheme	Irish Grant Scheme	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/irish-grant-scheme	
Volunteer	Volunteer	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/volunteer	
Romero Fund	The Romero Fund	https://www.trocaire.org/donate/romero	
Resources	Resources	https://www.trocaire.org/resources	
Fundraising	Fundraise	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/fundraising	
Somalia Education	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhqWe9_Ak0A	May 27 2014 Trócaire

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink
Layer 2		
Life In Lebanon	Video	https://vimeo.com/184375937 September 26 2016
Fundraising Tips	Fundraising Tips	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/fundraise/fundraising-tips
Women's Response	Women's Empowerment	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/gender
Gaza Project	Gaza	https://www.trocaire.org/donate/romero/gaza
Education	Education	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/education
Ethiopia	Ethiopia	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/ethiopia
Gaza Reconstruction	Gaza Reconstruction	https://www.trocaire.org/blogs/gaza-reconstruction
Parish Work	Parishes	https://www.trocaire.org/resources/parishes
Malawi	Malawi	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/malawi
Burning Question	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcsXm1UI0fs | June 15 2015 Trocaire
Syria	Syria	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/syria
Regular Giving	Regular Giving	https://www.trocaire.org/donate/regular-giving
Refugee Crisis Appeal	Refugee Crisis	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/refugee-crisis
Major Gift	Major Gift	https://www.trocaire.org/donate/major-gift
Policy & Advocacy	Policy And Advocacy	https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy
Layer 3		
Be A Climate Activist	Climate Justice	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/climate-justice
Climate Justice	Get Involved	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved
Lenten Campaign	Lenten Campaign	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/lent
Rep. Of Ireland	Speak Out For Climate Justice	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/climate-justice/burning-question
Humanitarian Response	Humanitarian Response	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/humanitarian-response
26 Miles	26 Miles	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/fundraise/26-miles
Food Resource & Rights	Food & Resource Rights	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/food-and-resource-rights
Solar Lamp	Solar Lamp	https://www.trocaire.org/gifts/solar-lamp
Climate Change in Northern Ethiopia	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIF32O2Vdho | February 27 2015 Trócaire
Our Exodus	Our Exodus	https://vimeo.com/144731317 November 5 2015 Trócaire
Educator Support	Educator Support	https://www.trocaire.org/getinvolved/education/educator-support
South Sudan	South Sudan	https://www.trocaire.org/whatwedo/wherewework/south-sudan
Supply Chain	Our Supply Chains	https://www.trocaire.org/about/work-with-trocaire/supply-chain

Closer To People	Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XlS9YbhoPXc	February 27 2012 Trócaire

ACUMEN

[Accessed March 19 – April 25 2017]

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink
Home Layer		
'Home'		http://acumen.org/
Layer 1		
Donate	Donation	https://www.classy.org/checkout/donation?eid=88993
Investment	Investments	http://acumen.org/investments/
Ideas	Ideas	http://acumen.org/ideas/
Partners	Our Partners	http://acumen.org/partner/
Volunteers	Volunteering	http://acumen.org/leadership/plusacumen/
Investments Model	Investment Model	http://acumen.org/investments/investment-model-2/
Acumen Plus	Acumen Plus	http://acumen.org/leadership/plusacumen/
Growing Prosperity	Growing Prosperity	http://acumen.org/growing-prosperity/
India	India	http://acumen.org/regions/india/
Latin America	Latin America	http://acumen.org/regions/latin-america/
Who Are We	About Us	http://acumen.org/about/
Regions	Our Regions	http://acumen.org/regions/
Read More	Aspiring Leaders	http://acumen.org/blog/questions-for-aspiring-leaders/
Apply for Investment	Application For Investment	http://acumen.org/investments/apply-for-investment/
Get Involved	Get Involved!	http://acumen.org/get-involved/

Archive Label	Page Title	Hyperlink
Layer 2		
Agriculture	Agriculture	*http://acumen.org/sectors/agriculture/*
Our Manifesto	Our Manifesto	http://acumen.org/manifesto/
Investment List	Our Investments	http://acumen.org/our-investments/
Housing	Housing	http://acumen.org/sectors/housing/
Wasi Organics	Wasi Organics	http://acumen.org/investment/wasi-organics/
Lean Data	Lean Data	http://acumen.org/ideas/lean-data/
Mekele Farms	Mekele Farms	http://acumen.org/investment/mekelle-farms/
Storytelling	Storytelling Course	http://plusacumen.org/courses/storytelling-for-change/
SiembraViva	SimebraViva	http://acumen.org/investment/siembra-viva/
Publications	Publications	http://acumen.org/ideas/?category=publications
Why Education (Interactive Panel)	Why Education	http://acumen.org/sectors/education/
Education	Education	http://acumen.org/sectors/education/
Work With Us	Work With Us	http://acumen.org/get-involved/work-with-us/
West Africa	West Africa	http://acumen.org/regions/west-africa/
Pakistan	Pakistan	http://acumen.org/regions/pakistan/
Layer 3		
Learn More	Climate Change	http://acumen.org/ideas/patient-capital/
Learn More	Social Innovation Course	http://plusacumen.org/courses/hcd-for-social-innovation/
Why Agriculture (Interactive Panel)	Why Agriculture	http://acumen.org/sectors/agriculture/
Why Housing (Interactive Panel)	Why Housing	http://acumen.org/sectors/housing/
East Africa	East Africa	http://acumen.org/regions/east-africa/
Advisory Board	Board	http://acumen.org/about/people/advisors/
Learn More	Social Enterprise Course	http://plusacumen.org/courses/socent101/
Global Fellowes Training	Global Fellowes	http://acumen.org/leadership/global-fellows/
Water	Water	http://acumen.org/sectors/water/
Regional Fellows	Regional Fellows	http://acumen.org/leadership/regional-fellows/
Become A Leader	Leadership	http://acumen.org/leadership/
Sectors	Sectors	http://acumen.org/sectors/

Why Energy (Interactive Panel)	Why Energy	http://acumen.org/sectors/energy/
Energy	Energy	http://acumen.org/sectors/energy/