

The role of media portrayals in shaping Oxfam's corporate reputation
Gaining knowledge on NGOs

Student Name: Luan Hongfei Weldam
Student Number: 600389

Supervisor: Annet Toornstra

Master Media Studies - Media & Business
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master's Thesis
June 2025

Word Count: 20462

ABSTRACT

The legitimacy of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is deeply depended on public trust and moral authority, making them uniquely vulnerable to reputational crises. This study explores how media portrayals shape the corporate reputation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with Oxfam as a case study. Drawing on Goffman's (1974) framing theory, McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory and Fombrun and Van Riel's (2004) reputation management. All viewed through Durkheim's (1893) structural functionalist lens. This research examines how media narratives influence the trust, legitimacy and capability of NGOs. Aiming at answering the main research question: *'In what ways do different portrayals in media shape Oxfam's corporate reputation?'*. Using a qualitative, longitudinal design, 44 news articles published between 2014 and 2024 were analyzed through thematic analysis that was supported by quantitative insights. This period includes Oxfam's 2018 sexual misconduct scandal, offering insight into reputational crisis and recovery in the years after.

The analysis revealed six themes: (1) accountability & governance failures, (2) crisis & organizational misconduct, (3) media representation & public discourse, (4) internal positioning, (5) reputation & legitimacy management and (6) donor dynamics & financial pressure. Results show how media shaped Oxfam's corporate reputation. By portraying internal crises as symptoms of structural failure and ethical inconsistency. For example scandals, like the one of Haiti from 2018 were sensationalized, contributing to widespread reputational damage. Media outlets also highlighted performative accountability and moral failure which reinforced organizational legitimacy loss. Political orientation also played a role in shaping corporate reputation because it was found to influence framing. While right-leaning outlets focused on scandal and hypocrisy, left-leaning media emphasized systemic issues and reform. The reputational crisis that followed had tangible consequences, including donor withdrawal, financial instability and having to shut down programs. Oxfam's internal efforts to rebuild trust, such as policy reforms and public apologies, were met with skepticism. These findings highlight how narrative positioning and framing shape NGO reputation, trust, and legitimacy.

Concluding that organizational reputation of NGOs does not only depend on internal

governance or ethical action. Instead, it is continuously co-produced through external media narratives, symbolic interpretation and public reactions. This reputational process is revealed to be complex, fragile, and non-linear. Highly depending on how actions are communicated and framed over time. Ultimately, the thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how crisis, legitimacy, and media discourse interact in the humanitarian sector. Showing that for NGOs, reputation is both a moral economy and a strategic resource. Adding to a broader societal understanding of how NGOs operate under moral scrutiny in a highly mediated environment.

KEYWORDS: Oxfam, corporate reputation, framing, legitimacy, crisis

Inhoud

ABSTRACT	2
1 Introduction	6
1.1 Introduction of the research paper	6
1.2 Relevance.....	9
1.3 Chapter outline.....	11
2 Theoretical framework.....	12
2.1 Overlapping paradigm	12
2.2 Core concept	13
2.3 Framing theory.....	13
2.4 Legitimacy	15
2.5 Agenda setting theory	16
2.6 Reputation management theory	18
2.7 Connecting theories	20
3 Research design and method	21
3.1 Research objective and operationalization	21
3.2 Data collection.....	22
3.3 Data analysis.....	25
3.4 Validity and reliability	27
4 Results.....	29
4.1 General findings.....	29
4.1.2 Distribution of themes across the news articles	30
4.2 Theme 1: accountability & governance failures.....	32
4.2.1 Leadership and structural weakness.....	33
4.2.2 Institutional and ethical responsibility	34
4.3 Theme 2: Crisis & organizational misconduct.....	35
4.3.1 Misconduct.....	35
4.3.2 Crisis response	36
4.3.3 Organizational Scandal	37
4.4 Theme 3: media representation & public discourse.....	38
4.4.1 Media and public narrative	39
4.4.2 Public Reaction	40
4.4.3 Framing and political influence	41
4.5 Theme 4: internal positioning.....	42
4.4.1 Reflection and rebuilding.....	43

4.4.2 Organizational Direction.....	44
4.6 Theme 5: reputation & legitimacy management.....	45
4.6.1 Reputation crisis.....	45
4.6.2 Reputation strategy	46
4.7 Theme 6: donor dynamics & financial pressure	47
4.7.1 Donor criticism and loss	48
4.7.2 Financial risk.....	49
4.8 Connecting themes.....	50
5 Conclusion.....	52
5.1 Answering the research question	52
5.2 Implications	53
5.2.1 Theoretical implications.....	53
5.2.2 Practical implications.....	55
5.3 Limitations.....	56
5.2 Future research.....	57
References	58
Appendix	68
Appendix A:.....	Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.
Appendix B:.....	69
Appendix C:.....	69
Appendix D:.....	70
Appendix E:	74
Appendix F:	75
Appendix G:.....	76
Appendix H:.....	77
Appendix I:	82
Appendix J:.....	83

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction of the research paper

Oxfam is one of the world's most recognized non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They are the second biggest NGO (Soken-Huberty, 2023, p. 1). Oxfam is not just a normal organization in the economic market, instead it operates in a highly visible and scrutinized space. NGOs are typically defined as independent, non-profit entities that operate outside formal governmental structures to address humanitarian, developmental, and social issues (Willets, 2002, para. 5). The modern concept of the NGO gained international attention since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 (Lewis, 2009, p. 90). Ever since then, NGOs have expanded significantly in both number and influence. Particularly from the 1970s onwards, in response to global crises and development challenges (Banks et al., 2014, p. 707). NGOs have diverse roles, they act as service providers, advocates, watchdogs, and partners in development. Often stepping in areas where governments are unable or unwilling to act (Hudock, 1999, p. 16). Their legitimacy comes from their perceived moral authority, neutrality, and effectiveness, especially in contexts related to social justice, humanitarian aid, and inequality reduction (Edwards, 2009, p. 43). As such, NGOs have become central actors in civil society and global governance. However, they continue to face increased scrutiny regarding transparency and accountability.

Oxfam (n.d.) states that their mission is ‘‘To fight inequality to end poverty and injustice. Offering lifesaving support in times of crisis and advocate for economic justice, gender equality, and climate action. We demand equal rights and equal treatment so that everyone can thrive, not just survive’’ (para. 1). Oxfam deals with sensitive and complicated issues. They also have a high media presence, informing the public about their work to provide transparency. However, in recent years, Oxfam and other NGOs have faced increased media scrutiny because they are being held to a higher moral standard than any other organization (De Bruin Cardoso et al., 2025, p. 1).

To understand this, it is important to look at the history of NGO news coverage. According to Marberg et al (2016, p. 2736), even though NGOs existed and were active before, not until the 1990s were NGOs collectively seen as a separate sector. That is when the consistent and recognized media coverage of NGOs began. Before the 1990s, NGOs like Greenpeace were known individually but not seen as an independent sector. What helped with this development was that newspapers like The New York Times used the term "nongovernmental organization" (NGO). This helped the public to recognize NGOs as a

legitimate, distinct sector. This way, media coverage helped NGOs by creating and embedding the term and category of “NGOs” in the public’s mind. Marberg et al., (2016, p.2736) also found that this new media attention did not just report on NGOs activities, but it also helped to construct the legitimacy of NGOs. Being labelled and categorized as an NGO in the media, and being positively covered in the news, it allowed NGOs to gain cognitive legitimacy by the public. Therefore, the media helped frame NGOs as an essential and legitimate part of global society. This builds on the theory of Deephouse and Suchman (2008, p. 50) in which they explain that through framing and repetition in the media, organizations can become perceived as legitimate. This demonstrates the crucial role of the media in shaping how NGOs are perceived by the public.

Besides, NGOs are different from any other organization, Spitzeck (2009, p. 158) emphasizes that NGOs act on behalf of society. They do not simply want other companies to work better, but they pressure them into becoming more responsible. They want companies to not only comply to set regulations but want companies to adopt to broader social and moral responsibilities. Therefore, NGOs are in a position where they have taken on the role of being an advocate for higher moral standards. Gibelman and Gelman (2001, p. 50) add that scandals and wrongdoings are sort of expected of non-NGO companies and governments. However, when a scandal occurs within an NGO, backlash of scrutiny will be tremendous since NGOs are held to a higher ethical standard, let alone legal behavior.

To give some examples of scandals and wrongdoings within NGOs in 2018, Oxfam was exposed for their sexual exploitation scandal. Oxfam’s employees engaged in sexual misconduct and abuse while they were on a humanitarian mission after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti (BBC News, 2018). It became worldwide news that sparked a global backlash which led to investigations, loss of funding, and reputational damage. It also raised concerns about accountability, oversight, and ethical behavior in the nonprofit sector (Clarke, 2021, p. 3). Not only Oxfam but other well-known NGOs like Red Cross have also been exposed for their misconduct. Red Cross faced criticism for their poor financial transparency. After the earthquake of 2010 in Haiti, they raised 500 million dollars but only built six homes (Elliott, 2015, para. 3). According to Gibelman and Gelman (2001, p. 58) scandals like these have increased scrutiny from donors, governments, and regulators. They have increasingly demanded greater accountability of these organizations. Gibelman and Gelman (2001, p. 49) also emphasize the important role investigative journalism has played in exposing financial mismanagement and fraud in NGOs.

However, besides this negative news about NGOs like Oxfam, there has also been a

lot of positive news coverage about Oxfam. These news portrayals in media both positive and negative affect organization's corporate reputation (Einwiller et al., 2010, p. 300). Therefore, it is important to understand what role the media narratives play in shaping the corporate reputations of NGOs like Oxfam. This study aims to analyze how different portrayals in media, affect Oxfam's corporate reputation. By investigating how different media outlets frame Oxfam in their news articles, this study seeks to uncover the long-lasting impact news portrayals have on Oxfam's corporate reputation. Furthermore, this study will look at the reoccurring trends in news portrayals about Oxfam over a longer period of time. The fact that newspapers can have certain political viewpoints (Elejalde et al., 2018, p. 2), is acknowledged by gathering articles from both left and right leaning newspapers. Therefore, based on this research objective, following research question has been formulated:

‘In what ways do different portrayals in media shape Oxfam's corporate reputation?’

With the following sub-questions:

1: What role does negative media coverage play in influencing corporate sponsors' and donors' trust in Oxfam?

2: What are the key differences in the portrayal of Oxfam across politically aligned media outlets?

3: What are the recurring trends in news related to Oxfam?

The core concept that will be explored in this study and how it is constructed is corporate reputation. Therefore, throughout this research Fombrun (1996) definition of corporate reputation will be used: ‘A corporate reputation is a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals’ (p. 144). The key takeaways of this definition are that reputation is based on perceptions of stakeholders. Reputation is built over time and reflects actions from the past, but it also anticipates future actions and behavior. Lastly, based on this definition reputation is compared and assessed in relation to other competitors.

To answer the research question and sub questions, a qualitative research approach is used to conduct a content analysis of secondary data that will be analyzed through a thematic analysis. The goal is to identify the reoccurring themes within the news articles that

determine corporate reputation. Both left and right politically aligned news outlets will be included in the analysis to understand whether different news sources display different narratives. The research focuses on the long-term effects of news coverage rather than on a specific targeted event. This research method is chosen so that the findings are not specific to one event but can be applied to a broader context.

1.2 Relevance

This study will fill the gap in literature and add scientific value because the existing literature on how media coverage influences corporate reputation, focuses predominantly on profit-based corporations (Harrison et al., 2021, p. 208). What is missing in this literature is that it overlooks the unique ethical challenges that NGOs face. Since NGOs are held to a higher moral standard, the challenges they face differ from any other organization (De Bruin Cardoso et al., 2025, p. 1). They often face social related challenges while other organizations face market related challenges. While existing studies have explored how NGOs construct legitimacy through self-presentation (Cooley & Ron, 2002, pp. 6-19), how donor expectations influence accountability (Sloan, 2008, pp. 220-224) and how NGOs are framed during crises (Allan & Hadden, 2017, pp. 600-604). There is a gap in research in examining how news media portrayals construct, challenge, or reshape NGO legitimacy and reputation over time. Scholars in this area often treat legitimacy as either assumed, or internally produced rather than as a discursive construct that is negotiated in public media narratives (Deloffre & Schmitz, 2019, pp. 611-615). Currently, theories on how media coverage influences corporate reputation are mostly based on profit-based organizations. However, these theories are not suitable to use on NGOs because their challenges and goals differ. Therefore, this research will consider all the unique ethical challenges that NGOs have to deal with. To get a comprehensive and thorough understanding of how portrayals in media shape Oxfam's corporate reputation over time. With these insights, theories can emerge on corporate reputation of NGOs that include the unique challenges they face.

While there is some research that focusses on how media has shaped the public perception of NGOs, most of this literature focuses on specific events or scandal coverage. However, Deloffre and Schmitz (2019, p. 608) argue that this approach fails to capture the dynamic nature of NGO legitimacy. It also fails to understand how the public perceives an NGO's legitimacy, which affects their corporate reputation. They emphasize that an NGO's legitimacy and the perception of it, is not fixed but a constantly changing process that unfolds over time. Dhanani & Kennedy (2022, p. 349) add that measuring legitimacy

based on a snapshot in time is therefore not the ideal way to conduct research on legitimacy of NGOs. Prior research that does address NGO reputation, tends to focus on the short-term effects crises, rather than longitudinal media narratives. Few studies analyze how NGOs are positioned in news coverage across multiple events. This forms a critical gap in understanding the role of media in deciding how to portray NGOs when they are under scrutiny. Especially in the context of systemic failures and moral accountability. As NGOs are expected to reflect high levels of ethical behavior and transparency. By analyzing media portrayals an essential understanding is gathered on how public trust is maintained, lost, or recovered (Gonçalves & Oliveira, 2022, pp. 23-32). And by employing a longitudinal design it can understand how perceptions of legitimacy and thus corporate reputation, change and develop over time. This study will add scientific value because it provides insight into corporate reputation over a span of 20 years. Using Oxfam as a case through which broader patterns of NGO representation are explored. It will not just analyze one event that determines legitimacy at a certain time. This research will delve into the long-lasting implications of news coverage and its impact. Furthermore, the aim of this research is not only to understand how Oxfam was portrayed. But how NGOs are generally represented and understood by the public through journalistic storytelling, framing, and the attribution of blame.

Furthermore, by understanding how different portrayals in media shape NGO's corporate reputation, it will help to develop better governance, accountability, and transparency in the nonprofit sector (Kioussis et al., 2007, p. 150). This is extremely important to NGOs that operate in the global humanitarian work scene, since they rely on public support. Therefore, corporate reputation plays a crucial factor in their ability to operate effectively. They rely on trust of the public which they gain from a good corporate reputation. Understanding how this trust is affected by different portrayals in media will help NGOs manage their corporate reputation. Therefore, this research will provide a framework that can help NGOs to understand how to navigate media scrutiny effectively and rebuild their corporate reputation.

On a societal level, this research speaks to the rising of public scepticism towards NGOs. Increasing politicization of humanitarian aid institutions and raising awareness on the media's power. By demonstrating how media narratives shape the corporate reputation of NGOs like Oxfam, it highlights the complexity of operating within an environment with high moral expectations. It encourages the thought that NGOs face moral difficult and different situations than profit-based organizations. Therefore, this study aims to inform the public on this complex topic. Understanding the media influence is crucial in this process because

negative or biased portrayals of NGOs in media can severely damage public trust (Lee et al., 2010, p. 10). Which impacts how effectively an NGO can operate, since they rely on trust. By showing how media portrayals can shape and twist NGO legitimacy, this study contributes to a more critical understanding of the role that journalism plays in holding NGOs accountable. Highlighting the potential risks of biased or sensationalized news coverage. It also provides insights to donors, policymakers, and advocacy groups that are concerned with safeguarding the credibility and functioning of humanitarian actors. Besides, this study encourages the public to think critically about NGOs and understand the role of media narratives and the effect it has on their trust. It is important to emphasize that there is a need for balanced and responsible journalism when reporting on NGOs. With a longitudinal approach, it challenges the short-term impact of scandal narratives that can undermine the long-term legitimacy of NGOs.

1.3 Chapter outline

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that has explained why it is relevant to conduct research on this topic. Chapter two starts with the theoretical framework that lays ground for this research. This chapter connects relevant theories to this research. It becomes clear through what lens the results will be analyzed. In chapter three the research method will be explained. It provides an overview of all the choices that were made to conduct this research. Looking into how previous research on similar topics was conducted and justifying why this method was chosen. Then chapter four is the first chapter in which the results will be presented and discussed. It will answer the first sub question about the relation between negative media coverage and sponsors' and donors' trust. This chapter highlights the role of negative media coverage and the long-lasting implications of it. It also emphasizes the role of politics in media. It investigates whether the political background of news outlet influence the portrayals of Oxfam. In this chapter the reoccurring trends will also be analyzed, giving an overview of the topics that Oxfam is most associated with. This will give insights into how Oxfam is mostly framed in news. Chapter six will be the last chapter, containing the conclusion. This chapter will reflect on this research and address its limits and future implications. The main findings will be summarized and connected to previous research for validation.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Overlapping paradigm

This research will be based on three main theories Goffman's (1974) framing theory, McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory and Fombrun and Van Riel's (2004) reputation management. To help us get a good research perspective, theories will be viewed through the lens of the structural functionalism paradigm. Durkheim (1893) laid the foundation for this paradigm. The structural functionalism paradigm views society as a complex system in which interdependent parts are working together to maintain stability. Durkheim (1893, pp. 68-88) also argued that social structures, including institutions, norms and values, function to maintain order and cohesion. They play a role in maintaining societal balance. This paradigm relates very well to this study. From a structural functionalism perspective, media is viewed as a social institution that has several functions. According to Anderson and Meyer (1975, p. 12) the functions of media from a structural functionalism perspective are providing information to the public, shaping public opinion, holding other organizations accountable and reinforcing societal norms and values. While NGOs like Oxfam serve as a different kind of social institution within society. In this society it serves a role in providing humanitarian aid, reducing inequality and promoting social justice. NGOs and media are different social institutions within a society however, their functions are interdependent. While they are both providing their functions to society, tensions and challenges arise between them.

An example of one of these situations in which tension and challenges arise is in times of crisis. For example, Oxfam's sexual exploitation scandal in 2010 after the earthquake in Haiti (BBC News, 2018). The media's function is to provide information and shape public opinion about the crisis. The media reinforce the norms and values that are expected of Oxfam by holding them accountable for their wrongdoing. However, this challenges Oxfam's relationship with media. It affects Oxfam's credibility which makes it harder for them to provide humanitarian aid, reduce inequality and promote social justice. This emphasizes the friction between institutions (Jayasinghe, 2011, p. 2). The media fulfil their role as institution while in some cases the execution of their role, hinders NGOs from effectively fulfilling theirs. This is important knowledge to this research because it is all about how media narratives eventually impact Oxfam's corporate reputation. The media holds NGOs accountable and forces NGOs to conform to set standards. It is the relation between the media and NGOs that is fundamental to this research, since it investigates the impact of media.

Therefore, it is important to this research it investigates what influences the media in how they portray NGOs. This paper will investigate the possible factors that determine media narratives.

2.2 Core concept

Before the theories that this research will draw up on are introduced, the most important concept of this study, corporate reputation will be explained. According to Fombrun (1996), corporate reputation is “A corporate reputation is a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals” (p. 144). Thus, corporate reputation relies on past actions, and trust in their ability to perform. Lammers and Guth (2013, p. 223) add that reputation is an intangible asset that is highly influenceable. In their paper, they highlight the important role that institutional theory and media influence play in shaping corporate reputation. The institutional theory regarding corporate reputations emphasizes that organizations maintain their reputation not only for financial gain, but also to conform to institutional expectations. Haack (2012, p. 26) adds on this by explaining that organizations conform to societal norms, rules, and expectations to gain legitimacy, stability, and trust. This theory highlights that organizations do not operate in isolation but are influenced by social structures, regulations, and cultural expectations. This connects to the structural functionalism paradigm that states that interdependent parts are working together to maintain stability. It enforces the idea that media and NGOs are interdependent which reflects on this research. The main idea of this research is, is that corporate reputation is influenced by media therefore this definition of how corporate reputation is constructed is fundamental to this research.

2.3 Framing theory

The first important theory to this research is Goffman's (1974) framing theory that explains how media and communicators shape public perception by emphasizing certain aspects of an issue while downplaying others. Later Entman (1993) elaborated on this theory in context of mass communication and media. He defined framing as “To select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (p.52).

News outlets can choose to frame Oxfam more negatively, for example emphasize on

Oxfam scandals rather than reporting on all the good things that Oxfam does. Mohammed (2024, p. 20) analyzed in his study how the media framed the role of NGOs in disaster management regarding landslides in Kerala, India. He found that negative framing of NGOs was more common. The media focused on their failures, inefficiencies, and lack of coordination rather than on all the positive contributions of NGOs. When the media deliberately chooses to focus more on the negative things rather than the positive contributions of an NGO, it negatively impacts their corporate reputation. This is an important insight because it emphasises the role that media narratives play in shaping NGO's corporate reputation. Zhang et al. (2024, p.3) add on this by explaining that negative media framing can damage NGOs' credibility and legitimacy, making it harder for them to get funding, partnerships, and public trust. Besides, according to Meriläinen and Vos (2013, p. 130) while negative framing can weaken NGO's credibility, positive framing can strengthen support.

Through the lens of the structural functionalism paradigm, it becomes evident that media narratives about NGOs play two roles. The media has a functional role by holding NGOs accountable to ensure their high moral standards. However, it also shows that the role of media becomes dysfunctional when their negative framing weakens NGOs, because it creates instability in humanitarian systems. Now that the role of media narratives have been established, it will help to understand how these narratives influence corporate reputation.

A theory that is similar to Goffman's (1974) framing theory, is priming theory. This theory is based on Lyengar and Kinder's (1987) research. The main idea of this theory is that the frequency and severity of certain issues in media coverage, affect the evaluation criteria that people apply to organizations. It links media exposure with judgment development while emphasizing the thought process behind public opinion. Meaning that if media constantly highlights scandals, audiences are nudged to evaluate NGOs based on ethics and accountability (Gibelman en Gelman, 2001, p. 54). Thus, the way a certain event is presented in media affects what the public sees as important in judging NGO legitimacy.

In comparison, framing theory offers a more direct approach and is based on actual text. Therefore, it provides an understanding as to how NGO reputations are constructed through media narratives. Whereas priming theory is more about how repeated media exposure can make certain issues more cognitively accessible to its audience. It emphasises the audience-centred and experimental effects. Particularly focusing on how citizens evaluate organizations based on media topics. However, this specific research does not measure audience response, but it investigates the different media portrayals of NGOs during a longer period of time. Therefore, priming theory is less applicable. Framing theory on the other hand,

focuses on how media emphasize specific aspects of reality to shape public interpretation (Entman, 1993, p. 53). This makes the framing theory particularly suitable for analyzing how journalistic choices, such as how narrative and tone can affect the perceived legitimacy of NGOs. Thus, while both of these theories can be applied to the topic of media narratives and corporate reputation, after careful consideration it was concluded that Goffman's (1974) framing theory was better suited for this research and therefore decided to refrain from Lyengar and Kinder's (1987) priming theory.

2.4 Legitimacy

An important concept is introduced in the framing theory, the concept of organizational legitimacy. NGOs rely on different forms of legitimacy to maintain public trust, secure funding, and justify their operations in the humanitarian field that is hard to navigate.

According to Suchman (1995) organizational legitimacy is "A generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an organization are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions." (p. 574).

Suchman (1995, pp. 577-586) divides this organizational legitimacy into three types: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. Pragmatic legitimacy is based on the perceived effectiveness of an organization in serving its stakeholder interests. In the case of NGOs, this means being perceived as an efficient humanitarian institution that delivers aid. That manages donor funds responsibly and achieves its development goals. While, moral legitimacy depends on socially constructed approval. This reflects whether the organization is perceived as ethical, transparent and in alignment with humanitarian values. This is especially important for NGOs, which are expected to act as highly moral actors (Watson, 2007, p. 135). Lastly, cognitive legitimacy also referred to as institutional legitimacy. This type of legitimacy reflects on whether an organization is perceived as an essential actor within the institutional environment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343). In times of crisis, big NGOs like Oxfam might maintain their institutional legitimacy. Mainly because of their longstanding reputation and perceived importance in the humanitarian field. Together, these forms of legitimacy shape how NGOs are judged by the public. Understanding how they are gained, challenged, or lost in media narratives is essential to analyzing the reputational dynamics of NGOs.

Suchman (1995, pp. 577-586) also emphasizes that while legitimacy is based on general representations that to some extent reflect on specific events, legitimacy is not based on one certain event. This builds on Perrow (1981, p. 18) that legitimacy rather depends on a

history of events. Explaining that while an organization might not always conform to societal norms, their legitimacy might stay intact because the deviations on societal norms may be seen as unique. Thus, indicating that the bigger picture is more important. A single misstep might be accepted because of the good reputation an organization has already build. Deciding to trust their good reputation and seeing the misstep as a single event. This especially applies to NGOs. What can be concluded from this definition is that one specific event according to Suchman (1995) and Perrow (1981), does not immediately impact legitimacy significantly. Applying this one to Oxfam, especially in times of crisis, it implies that one specific scandal does not immediately affect their legitimacy. This implication lays the foundation for sub question one. While negative media coverage might not immediately impact legitimacy, it will be investigated what the role of this negative coverage exactly is in influencing corporate sponsors' and donors' trust in Oxfam.

Suddaby et al. (2017, p. 455) emphasize that NGOs' legitimacy is a special case since they need their legitimacy to operate effectively. Therefore, NGOs must achieve a trustable legitimacy. Because NGOs do not work for profit but rather to support society, society perceives NGOs instantly as legitimate. Therefore, when they are involved in a scandal, the public might look at the bigger picture and forgive them for the scandal because of all the good they do for society. Bitektine and Haack (2014, p. 51) add on this by explaining why and how legitimacy is a socially constructed concept based on norms and values. The evaluation process of validating legitimacy depends on a socially constructed judgment process. Legitimacy is not an objective but rather a perception shaped by social contexts. Such as media, cultural expectations, and stakeholder values. This argument highlights the role that media plays in constructing legitimacy perception. It also emphasizes that expectations to do good of NGOs influences forgiveness of scandals. Which are important insights to this research.

2.5 Agenda setting theory

Another theory that emphasizes the role that media plays in shaping corporate reputation is McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory. This theory argues that the media does not tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. Through the selection and emphasis on certain topics, the media influences which topics are perceived as important by the public. News outlets choose which stories they report on, influencing what people are going to be thinking about. This theory closely connects to the framing theory of Goffman (1974). While the agenda-setting theory influences on what people think about, framing

theory influences how they think about it. Thus agenda-setting makes NGOs a topic of discussion, but framing defines their credibility. Wonneberger and Jacobs (2017, p. 363) found in their study that NGOs often receive less media attention than other corporations. However, when they do receive attention, the way they are framed in the story strongly affects their reputation.

An argument that can be made against this theory is the general idea that "all publicity is good publicity". However, this argument is often based on profit focussed organizations, whereas NGOs are highly dependable on trust. Publicity, in this case media coverage is used to raise awareness for a certain product or service. Therefore, any kind of publicity either positive or negative is good publicity because it creates awareness among its consumers (Pacis et al., 2022, p. 42). However, in case of NGOs, it certainly matters whether they receive positive or negative publicity. The way an NGO is framed, and which stories are put on the agenda matters because NGOs are dependent on trust. Trust of the public, stakeholders and donors. Davis et al. (2020) conducted experimental research on how trust in NGOs was influenced by different narratives. They concluded that the different ways in which NGOs were framed in fact had an influence on the amount of trust they had in NGOs. Therefore, their research supports the argument that in case of NGOs it does matter whether they are framed positively or negatively in the media. Because when the media decides to go with a negative narrative, NGOs lose the trust of the public. This was especially the case of Oxfam in 2018. News came about Oxfam being involved in sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. This scandal led to a decline in public and governmental trust. In this particular organization, media framing played a big role in how Oxfam's reputation was damaged (Clarke, 2021, p. 220). This supports the idea that media framing and agenda setting influence corporate reputation.

Benkler's et al. (2018, pp 295-310) research emphasized that an important factor in how certain topics are framed and what topics are put on the agenda of news outlets, is their political background. The political background of a news outlet can determine what narrative it takes about a certain topic. Therefore, influencing what news articles are published and how certain topics are framed, and which topics are emphasized. Farady et al. (2025, p. 111) found that left-leaning media portrayed AI as a threat to workers and equity, while right-leaning outlets frame it as a tool for capitalist innovation. This research emphasizes that news outlets with certain ideological backgrounds tend to select topics and narratives that align with their political views, reinforcing biases among their audiences. This supports the idea that there is a distinction in narratives between left and right leaning news outlets.

There is clearly a distinction between politically aligned news outlets in how they decide to frame certain topics and which narratives they take on. However, there is not much literature that investigates what the key differences across politically aligned media outlets in the portrayal of Oxfam or NGOs in general are. Therefore, this research will explore what the differences are between politically aligned news outlets on the topic of Oxfam. Gathering more information about the framing of NGOs.

By viewing this through the structural functionalism paradigm of Durkheim (1893), media fulfils their functions to society. Because it informs the public about the key social issues and also shapes social norms and values because it nudges people what to think about. However, because of the different political backgrounds of news outlets, it can divide society. Different news outlets can have different narratives which can lead to disruption in social norms and values. This is an insight that will be discussed in the results of the data analysis.

2.6 Reputation management theory

Another theory that connects to this research is the theory on reputation management by Fombrun and Van Riel (2004). They explore how successful companies build their winning reputations. In their book, they introduce the Reputation Quotient framework to measure corporate reputation across six dimensions. This framework evaluates corporate reputation based on emotional appeal, leadership, financial performance, social responsibility, workplace environment, and product/service quality. Their research highlights that proactive media engagement, transparency, and consistent messaging are key to building and maintaining trust. This framework of Fombrun and Van Riel (2004, p. 52) can be applied to Oxfam because these six dimensions that measure corporate reputation can be examined through media. Therefore, it helps to explain how different portrayals in media can affect donor trust, corporate sponsorships, and public credibility. Thus, this theory emphasizes the impact that media has on corporate reputation.

An important concept within this framework is trust, Kim (2025, pp. 1-2) connects trust to legitimacy. While her research is mostly about the role of financial transparency in fostering trust, particularly in nonprofit organizations and not specifically to NGO, this research recognizes that trust is a crucial factor in determining organizational legitimacy. Especially in the nonprofit sector where the focus is not to make the most profit but on other motives. As mentioned before trust is needed to build and maintain legitimacy of NGOs. Hudson (2001, p. 348) adds on this by explaining that in case of NGOs, trust is particularly

gained by making consistent efforts in being transparent, accountable, and responsive to diverse stakeholder interests, including donors, stakeholders, governments, and the media.

Sargeant & Lee's (2004, p. 187). add on the importance of trust by exploring how trust influences donor commitment and giving behavior. They argue that trust is a crucial foundation for nonprofit legitimacy. When this trust is damaged because of scandals or media scrutiny, it will lead to donor withdrawal and long-term reputational damage. Leardini et al. (2018, p. 521) elaborate on this by explaining how trust in NGOs develops. They explain that trust develops through stakeholder engagement and by keeping their values aligned with their mission. Meaning that NGOs must act ethically correct to be seen as reliable. Furthermore, this research investigates how nonprofit organizations manage stakeholder engagement in order to gain, maintain, and repair legitimacy. This also applies to NGOs that must navigate in an increasingly scrutinized social environment. Deloffre and Schmitz (2019, p. 607) build on this with their research on how trust-based legitimacy is relational and socially constructed through interactions with stakeholders. They constantly evaluate NGOs' ethical correctness and therefore determine the moral authority that NGOs have. Thus, NGOs have to work on their relationship with their stakeholders to maintain their legitimacy. This makes stakeholder engagement is no longer optional but essential for NGOs to operate effectively. Especially in the contemporary environment with growing demands for accountability, transparency, and trust.

Coming back to how the concept of trust is related to the theory on reputation management, Fombrun and Van Riel (2004) define corporate reputation as a stakeholder's overall evaluation of an organization over time, based on its performance, transparency and alignment with societal expectations. Their theory emphasizes that corporate reputation emerges out of organizational actions and stakeholder perceptions. Therefore, making trust, transparency, and stakeholder engagement essential factors to build and maintain a good corporate reputation.

These articles provide a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for examining how NGOs like Oxfam manage to maintain stakeholders' trust and legitimacy, especially during media crises. It also reinforces idea that legitimacy is a socially constructed phenomenon, and that corporate reputation is not given but earned and has to be actively managed, particularly in the high-scrutiny environment in which NGOs operate.

According to Chen & Otubanjo (2013, p. 333) from a structural functionalism point of view, corporate reputation serves as a stabilizing function within the nonprofit sector. By organizations striving to accomplish a successful reputation, ensures that trust is upheld,

donations continue, and organizations operate effectively. When NGOs maintain a positive reputation, they reinforce public trust and fulfil their function to deliver humanitarian aid. Therefore, in Fombrun & van Riel's (2004) framework, media influence on corporate reputation can be seen as a functional system that regulates public perception.

2.7 Connecting theories

Goffman's (1974) framing theory, McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory and Fombrun and Van Riel's (2004) reputation management theory are the three main theories that will guide this research. They are viewed through the lens of structural functionalism paradigm (Durkheim, 1893) and provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how media narratives shape corporate reputation and the legitimacy of NGOs like Oxfam. These theories collectively emphasize that media does not only reflect on societal values but also actively contributes to constructing public perceptions. Within the nonprofit sector in which legitimacy and trust are needed to operate effectively, media portrayals can deeply affect how stakeholders perceive and therefore evaluate NGO's corporate reputation. Fombrun and Van Riel's model on reputation management (2004), links to corporate reputation and stakeholder perception. Which over time, connects to the framing and agenda-setting theory. Highlighting the importance of consistent performance and transparency, in order to build trust. From the structural functionalist paradigm point of view, it becomes clear that NGOs and the media are interdependent social institutions. Each fulfilling vital roles to society, however sometimes friction emerges between the two. By situating this research within this theoretical framework, it becomes clear that media portrayals are not innocent but rather have tangible reputational consequences that affect NGOs' ability to operate. These portrayals can affect their funds and credibility. Therefore, this theoretical framework is essential for analyzing how reputational damage emerges and how it can be managed in this contemporary complex media landscape.

3 Research design and method

3.1 Research objective and operationalization

This is an exploratory study that seeks to understand the complex phenomenon of corporate reputation that has little preexisting research regarding NGOs. It is particularly interested in the role of the media and shaping that reputation. And how this reputation is affected due to scandals. This will be done so with a qualitative research approach that is assisted with quantitative insights. A qualitative research approach allows for a deep understanding of how media portrayals shape organizational reputation. Whereas quantitative research would focus more on numbers and trends, qualitative research allows to capture emotions, opinions, and underlying meanings (Hollstein, 2014, p. 405).

In this study the core concept that is explored and how it is constructed, is corporate reputation. In this research, this concept is understood to be a socially constructed and discursively mediated perception of an organization's trustworthiness, legitimacy and competence as moral actor in the humanitarian field. Therefore, rather than treating corporate reputation as a fixed, measurable object, it is approached as a dynamic and symbolic construct that is shaped by public discourse and media narratives (Carroll, 2009, p. 361). To explore how Oxfam's reputation is constructed, challenged and maintained in the discourse of news articles. A set of qualitative indicators was developed and applied during the thematic coding process.

The first indicator for the construction of corporate reputation is evaluative language. Previous research highlights how evaluative discourse shape audience interpretation and reputational meaning (García, 2010, p. 59). The presence of certain words and descriptions, such as 'trusted', 'credible' or 'corrupt', represents how an organization is judged. Therefore, impacting their corporate reputation.

The second indicator is attribution of responsibility. This identifies where media narratives assign blame, present cover-ups or highlight organizational accountability. Pointing out to who is responsible for the organizational failure. This reflects on how the discursive construction of moral responsibility emerges (Coombs, 2007, p. 167).

The third indicator is how organization's role is framed. This entails whether Oxfam is portrayed as a hero, scapegoat, or institutional failure. This provides insight into reputational framing. This is an important indicator because prior research on media framing and reputation repair emphasizes that narrative positioning affects public trust (Koivula et al., 2024, p. 2)

The fourth indicator is the credibility and positioning of the people that were quoted in the news articles. Throughout the news articles government officials, NGO representatives, critics, and survivors were quoted. Their voices contribute to the construction of the organization's legitimacy (Einwiller et al., 2010, p. 312).

The fifth indicator is public reaction like stakeholder response. According to Coombs and Holladay (2014, p. 43) mentions of corporate sponsorship, public sentiment, and social media reactions in news articles can analyze stakeholder response. While increased mentions of corporate sponsorship, public sentiment and positive social media reactions indicate how corporate reputation is influenced by stakeholder response. Mentions of donor withdrawal, protests, sanctions, or public outrage serve as external validation of reputational consequences (Einwiller et al., 2010, p. 312). Thus, each article that will be included in this study must include one or more of these indicators.

This approach draws on constructivist and discursive perspectives on how reputation is constructed. These perspectives emphasize how media outlets, through language and framing can co-produce and enforce reputational meaning in the public sphere (Schultz et al., 2011, p. 99). By thematically analyzing these indicators across the data selection of news articles. This study seeks to uncover how Oxfam's reputation is shaped after crisis and how reputational efforts intersect with broader struggles for legitimacy in the humanitarian sector.

3.2 Data collection

For this research content analysis is used by analyzing secondary data. Therefore, the unit of analysis are news articles in which Oxfam is the main topic. Since the news articles are available in the public domain there was no explicit permission needed to use the data. It will employ a longitudinal study, because it focuses not on how one specific event affects Oxfam's corporate reputation. Rather it focuses on the longitudinal effects of media portrayals on corporate reputation. Therefore, the timeframe for this study is 10 years. From 2014 till 2024. By choosing a timeframe of 10 years the longitudinal effects on corporate reputation will become clear. Rather than how one single event shapes corporate reputation in the short term.

The specific timeframe between 2014-2024 has been chosen because it offers the perfect time frame for examining the development of Oxfam's reputation. Within this period, there was a defining crisis in 2018. Reports surfaced that senior staff had engaged in sexual misconduct while on mission in Haiti (Gayle, 2018). The scandal caused significant reputational damage. This led to the government of the UK to temporarily suspend funding,

triggering global media scrutiny. The scandal was marked as a shift in public perception, making it an important moment in time for reputation research.

In the following years as a response to the scandal, Oxfam implemented lots of reforms between 2018 and 2021, including new safeguarding policies and structural leadership changes (Oxfam International, 2021). Studying these reforms allows for analysis of reputation recovery and organizational accountability. By extending the timeline all throughout 2024, it allows for this study to assess the long-term consequences of the scandal. It helps to uncover how Oxfam's legitimacy was reconstructed or damaged in the public sphere years after the scandal. Analyzing whether the media continued to focus on the scandal or moved towards new framings of the organization. Furthermore, the period is shaped by major humanitarian challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, offering Oxfam opportunities to prove its relevance once again and rebuild trust. The ten-year span provides a balanced timeline to assess the organization's reputation before, during, and after the crisis. It captures both the immediate impact and the long-term effects, making it ideal for exam

Brown and Dacin (1997, p. 79) emphasize that corporate associations and reputational perceptions are built but also evolve over time. Therefore, a longitudinal research design makes this the most suitable approach for analyzing how corporate reputation changes over time. They also highlight that corporate reputation is not a static construct but rather shaped through repeated stakeholder interactions and constant media exposure. Thus, a longer time period is needed to understand changes in perception and legitimacy. Therefore, this will be one of the criteria for sample selection. The article must be published between 2014 and 2024. 44 news articles that include one or more of the previous mentioned indicators will be carefully picked. This sample size has been chosen because this sample size according to Janssen and Verboord (2024, p. 7), a qualitative content analysis of news content for a master thesis should include 40-60 reports of more than 300 words. This sample size was established because this provides enough data for a master's research. For this research, the decision was made to choose 44 articles. Within this sample a distinction is made between left leaning and right leaning news outlets. 22 articles from left leaning newspapers and 22 articles of right leaning newspapers will be gathered. By doing so this research is politically inclusive and will provide a balanced sample including all representations. However, the overarching criteria of these news articles is that they need to be written by professional journalists. Therefore, only news articles with verifiable authors are included in this research. The second criterion is that the article should cover something about Oxfam's organizational actions.

For this research, purposive sampling will be used because only articles that can measure Oxfam’s reputation will be picked. This ensures relevance to this research’s main question because only relevant and high-quality data will be selected this way. Making it ideal for media and corporate reputation studies (Campbell et al., 2020, p. 654).

To ensure unbiased data, the server history will be deleted before searching for news articles. The search will be Oxfam and with the search tool it is possible to search for articles in specific years. Per year between 2014 and 2024, four articles will be picked. Two of left and two of right leaning news outlets. The articles that pop up first will be picked, they must not be sponsored or produced by Oxfam themselves. Appendix (H) gives an overview of all the news articles that were picked for this research. To get a quick overview on data information two tables were developed. Table 1 provides an overview of all the politically left-aligned news outlets of which articles were picked. Table 2 provides an overview of all the politically right-aligned news outlets of which articles were picked. They describe how many articles of these news outlets were picked and what their country of origin is.

Table 1
Politically left aligned news articles

News Outlet	Political orientation	Country	How many articles used
The Guardian	Left	United Kingdom	13
Al Arabiya	Left	Saudi-Arabia	1
Voice of America	Left	USA	2
The New Yorker	Left	USA	2
UK Fundraising	Left	United Kingdom	1
New York Times	Left	USA	1
The Week	Left	USA	1
The New Humanitarian	Left	United Kingdom	1
Al Jazeera	Left	Quatar	1
Sudan Tribune	Left	Sudan	1

Table 2
Politically right aligned news articles

News Outlet	Political orientation	Country	How many articles used
Times of Israel	Right	Israel	2
The Times	Right	United Kingdom	10
Bandt News	Right	Australia	1
CNS Business	Right	Cayman Islands	1
AP News	Right	USA	1
Seychelles News Agency	Right	Seychelles	1
Morocco World News	Right	Morocco	1
Telegraph	Right	United Kingdom	1
Fiji Times	Right	Fiji	1
Civil Society	Right	United Kingdom	1

3.3 Data analysis

This research is exploratory in nature and will therefore be conducted in an inductive manner. One of the reasons for this is that there is not enough evidence for specific frameworks in preexisting literature covering this topic. It also leaves room for new insight to emerge from the data, rather than confirming already existing theories (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). According to Thomas (2006), an inductive approach for qualitative data has three purposes: the first one being ‘to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format’ (p.2). The second one ‘To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated to others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research).’ (p. 2). As last the one ‘To develop of model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the text (raw data).’ (p. 2). This study aims to uncover themes and patterns of textual qualitative data that do not already have pre-existing assumptions or theories. Therefore, an inductive approach is the most suitable for this research.

To conduct this research, a mixed-method approach is used, a reflexive thematic analysis and quantitative content analysis. Starting with the reflexive thematic analysis (TA). According to Clarke and Braun (2016, p. 297) a TA is a good method to analyze this topic because TA is a method used to identify, analyze and interpreted patterns of themes in qualitative data to uncover meaningful insights and patterns. This applies to the Oxfam reports because the goal is to identify the themes and patterns within news articles. This TA approach is also not based on preexisting theories but leaves room for theory to emerge. Therefore, this method is particularly well-suited for exploring different media portrayals without being constrained by predefined theoretical constructions. Through a process of familiarization with data, initial coding, and theme development, this analysis aims to uncover recurring concerns and dominant narratives in the sample of newspaper articles about Oxfam.

A thematic analysis was chosen because it allows for conceptual flexibility in uncovering patterns of meaning across a qualitative dataset. Not requiring to stick to a pre-existing coding framework or theory. An argument can be made for this research to employ a frame analysis instead of a thematic analysis. While frame analysis is a common method in media studies, especially when examining how specific events are structured and interpreted (Entman, 1993). It was not chosen as method of analysis for this study because frame analysis focuses on how media frames certain information to promote specific interpretations. While the aim of this particular study was not to identify static frames. The

goal of this study is to rather examine how concepts around corporate reputation are constructed and emphasized. Also, frame analysis often relies on a predefined coding scheme or frame typology. Which may constrain an analysis like this when working with complex, constantly evolving representations like NGO crises. This inductive thematic approach is grounded in interpretivist epistemology, which sees meaning as socially constructed and embedded within context (Bryman, 2016, p. 6). From this perspective, legitimacy is not a fixed attribute but as something dynamic that is being influenced by shifting narratives. Therefore, a thematic analysis was chosen because it is better suited for this study's interpretivist perspective and theoretical interest. Especially because this research seeks to uncover deeper patterns of meaning, symbolic language, and discursive strategies that play a role in the processes of legitimacy construction.

The TA will be conducted according to Braun & Clarke's (2006, pp. 88-93) six-step thematic analysis. Although this method leaves room for reflexivity, it requires an iterative process to ensure transparency. The first step is data familiarization, then initial codes will be generated, followed by theme development. After that, the themes that were found will be reviewed, making sure that they correctly comprehend the data. Then the themes must be refined and named. Lastly, a report on the findings will be produced. Thus, a TA allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of what is highlighted in the media highlights, and how often certain topics are covered across outlets or overtime. Furthermore, a TA can provide both an understanding of underlying and explicit interpretation. This helps to identify not only the stated subjects that are discussed in the news, but also the underlying social meanings and power dynamics embedded in the text (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). This stage forms the empirical foundation. On which the second stage, quantification of data is based on

The thematic analysis that will be conducted on this data will use a coding approach of 4 stages. The first stage is open coding in which initial codes will be identified. This step will help with systemic data reduction. During this stage, the whole sample is coded paragraph by paragraph, including all data. Then AI-coding is applied to the whole data set. This will help to verify the initial codes and enhance the credibility of these codes. This will also be done on the whole data set. The next step is axial coding in which similar codes from the initial coding process, and the AI coding process are grouped together into broader themes. The goal of this step is to refine the codes to establish relationships between different codes. Then, the data set is coded again with the codes that have emerged during this process. However, this time it only focuses on information that is relevant to this research. The final step in the coding process is selective coding. This involves refining the themes into cohesive

narratives so that all relevant codes are connected to the research question. Making sure that all the codes that are assigned to a theme actually fit and work well together. The coding process will be done in the coding program AtlasTI. This program provides detailed outcome files that can be verified (see appendix A, B & C). Especially during the axial and selective coding phase AtlasTI. makes it which codes are grouped together and for a theme. The codebook with examples of the coded text will be added to this research to illustrate how themes emerged. This way, the decisions that are made in this process are verifiable.

On an important note, a reflexive stance was maintained throughout the whole analysis. Acknowledging the role of the researcher's personal background in shaping the identification and interpretation of themes. As Braun and Clarke (2016, pp. 297-298) suggest, the themes in this study are not understood as objective facts that emerged from data. But more as interpretive patterns that are co-constructed through interaction between the data and the researcher's theoretical and contextual perspective. This reflexive thematic approach supports the study's aim to critically explore how media portrayals contribute to the constructing NGO's corporate reputation.

Even though, a TA gives us a comprehensive understanding of themes within the news articles, it does not say much about the significance of the themes themselves. Therefore, a quantitative content analysis is also applied. Riffe et al. (2023, p. 32) emphasize that a quantitative content analysis can help to describe media content. Meaning that it can help with descriptive insights such as how much attention is devoted to certain themes within qualitative data. Riffe et al. (2023, p. 33) also explain the advantages of statistical rigor. By quantifying themes, statistical techniques that uncover themes and patterns can be applied. This is useful for this research because it is a longitudinal study. Therefore, quantitative support can give this research insights into how themes are distributed, especially after catastrophic events. Thus, the thematic analysis will provide us with a deep, contextual understanding of how Oxfam is portrayed. While the quantitative content analysis allows us to turn the themes into measurable objects that will give us meaningful insights about the statistics of these themes.

3.4 Validity and reliability

In qualitative research, the researcher's perspective plays a central role in how data is analysed and interpreted (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 593). This kind of research is therefore often highly subjective and prone to potential bias. Thus, it is of great importance to

analyze the data systematically and carefully document every step in the process of theme development to increase transparency and reliability. Additionally, the researcher should at all times stay aware of the ways that subjectivity may influence the course of data analysis. By continuously evaluating all decisions and assumptions that were made about the data. This will enhance the trustworthiness of research findings (Herzog et al., 2019, pp. 388-390). In terms of research validity, Silverman (2011, pp. 375) argued for increased validity of qualitative research through a constant comparative method and deviant case analysis. The constant comparative method involves the constant comparing of the different parts of data. While remaining open to identify new codes. Testing and comparing whether the themes and sub-themes have been properly developed and fit in with the research question. In this study, the constant comparative method was applied because the thematic analysis was conducted inductively and iteratively. Allowing for patterns and themes to emerge from the data without being forced into pre-existing categories. Themes that were found were grounded in rich textual data and repeatedly compared against multiple articles to ensure that interpretations remained valid. The codebook (appendix D) demonstrates the systematic documentation of the coding process's decisions. Contributing to interpretive validity and ensuring that all findings were coherent and aligned with the theoretical framework. The deviant case analysis helps deepen the analysis by looking at codes that may not fit well within the standard categories. Therefore, it is necessary to reevaluate them until all codes have been correctly matched to a theme. Or have been discarded in case they did not add to the research purpose. By applying these methods, it increased the research's validity in accurately capturing the social concept that this study aims to uncover.

As for the reliability of this research, the data analysis is supported by a documented and verifiable methodology. During the data collection, all news articles that were selected had to meet the same criteria. While the subjective nature of thematic coding introduces interpretive flexibility. By using explicit coding criteria, iterative theme refinement and the constant revisiting of earlier coded data to make sure everything fit in, helped maintain analytical coherence.

4 Results

4.1 General findings

The following chapter will present and interpret the results of the thematic analysis conducted on the 44 news articles between 2014 and 2024 with QDA tool Atlas.ti. The findings are discussed in relation to the study's research sub-questions:

- 1 *“What role does negative media coverage play in influencing donors' trust in Oxfam?”*
- 2 *“What are the key differences in the portrayal of Oxfam across politically aligned media outlets?”*
- 3 *“What are the reoccurring trends in news related to Oxfam?”*

These sub-questions ultimately contribute to answering the main research question:

“In what ways do different portrayals in the media shape Oxfam's corporate reputation?”

First, the general findings will be presented, this will provide an overview of the themes that inductively emerged from the data. Not only are the themes presented, but it will also provide an overview on how they are distributed throughout the data. This is important to demonstrate since this is a longitudinal study, therefore by providing an overview of theme distribution throughout the years, patterns will become clearer. Then, the six themes that emerged from the thematic analysis will be discussed in dept separately. This will be done in relation to the research questions and theoretical framework that leads this research. To support these qualitative findings, quantitative data is used to contextualize and support the qualitative insights. Lastly, all themes will be summarized and briefly connected to this research's theoretical perspective in preparation for the broader reflection in the conclusion chapter.

The coding process that was applied to the data sample was guided by open coding and iterative theme refinement. Illustrative quotes were then picked from the data to provide evidence for the emerged categories. The codebook that was then developed (Appendix D) presents a structured overview of the main themes, sub-themes, and corresponding open codes, together with illustrative quotations that support the interpretive framework.

After conducting the thematic analysis, six themes emerged from the analyzed news articles. The QDA tool Atlas.ti supported this process by providing charts of how these themes were distributed among the news articles. Based on these charts (Appendix E), a table providing a clear overview of theme distribution among left and right leaning newspapers over the years was developed (Appendix G). Getting all the data into readable format like charts and tables

was an important step since it makes it easier to uncover patterns and relations (Divecha et al., 2023, p. 125). By using this inductive approach, the six main themes that were identified from the data were: (1) accountability & governance failures, (2) crisis & organizational misconduct, (3) media representation & public discourse, (4) internal positioning, (5) reputation & legitimacy management and (6) donor dynamics & financial pressure. Each theme was then broken down into multiple sub-themes. This helped to explore the nuanced aspects of broader thematic categories. Therefore, table 3 provides an overview of the themes with corresponding sub-themes.

Table 3
Overview of themes and sub-themes

Crisis & organizational misconduct	Accountability & governance failures	Media representation & public discourse	Donor dynamics & financial pressure	Reputation & legitimacy management	Internal positioning
Misconduct	Leadership and structural weakness	Media and public narrative	Donor criticism and loss	Reputation crisis	Reflection and rebuilding
Organizational response	Institutional and ethical responsibility	Public reaction	Financial risk	Reputation strategy	Organizational direction
Organizational scandal		Framing and political influence			

4.1.2 Distribution of themes across the news articles

Now that the themes had emerged during the data analysis phase. A frequency table (see appendix F & G) was made for quantitative support of the 44 news articles, published between 2014 and 2024. This table shows how often each theme and sub-theme appeared across the news articles. The distribution of themes related to the Oxfam crisis reveals a shifting and intensifying discourse around humanitarian accountability and legitimacy. The most outstanding results from this table are that accountability & governance failures and crisis & organizational misconduct are the most frequently occurring themes, appearing in 43

and 41 articles. The longitudinal nature of this study allows to uncover and detect temporal patterns.

Previously in the method section of this study it was explained why this exact time period was chosen. The distribution of the themes reflects on this.

In the years between 2014–2016, the dominant themes were crisis & organizational misconduct, accountability & governance failures and media representation & public discourse. This emphasizes the immediate reaction to topics surrounding internal organizational failures. These themes were consistently present across both left- and right-leaning media outlets. Although right-leaning news outlets tended to emphasize on misconduct.

Then from 2017 to 2019, the news coverage expanded to the inclusion of donor dynamics & financial pressure and reputation & legitimacy management. A spike in these themes around 2018 can be explained by the Haiti sex scandal was uncovered and broadcasted in the media. Indicating that media coverage highlighted the systemic impacts of the scandal. This makes for critical thinking about how the reputational damage due to scandal influenced funding and public trust. Internal dynamics also became more mediated. With several articles mentioning internal positioning, particularly in right-leaning outlets such as The Times and The Telegraph.

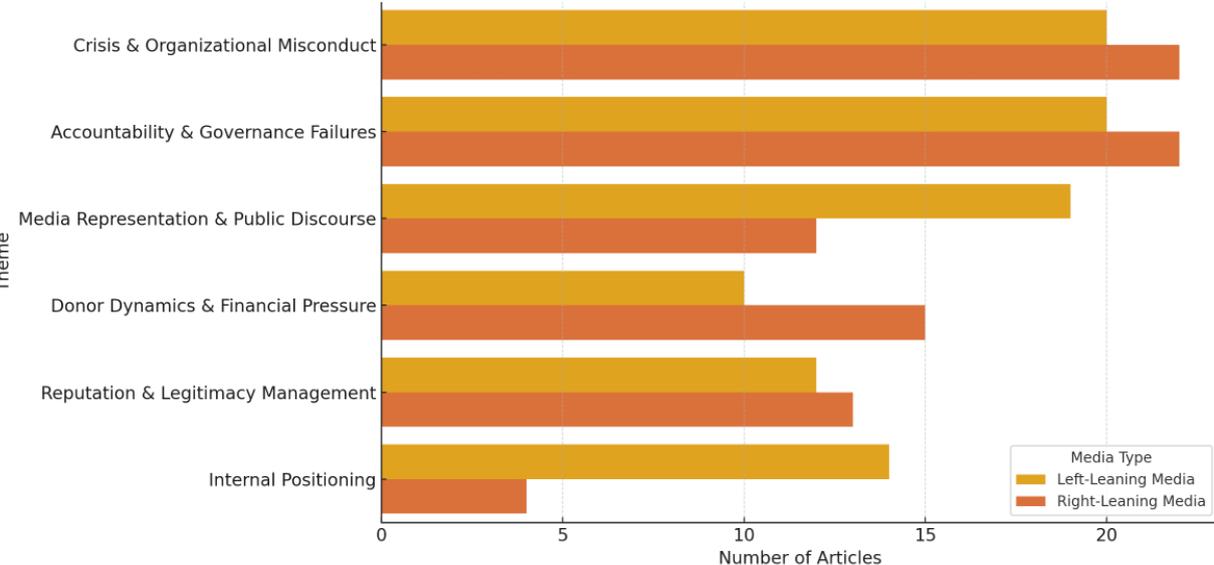
Between 2020 and 2024, the coverage transformed into a broader institutional critique of NGOs. After the scandal was made public, themes related to donor dynamics & financial pressure and internal positioning became more prominent in articles published after 2020. Indicating a shift towards organizational recovery and financial stabilization after having endured an organizational reputation crisis. Simultaneously, the persistent recurrence of themes like governance failures and media discourse suggests that Oxfam's past continued to haunt them. By shaping how the public and press interpreted its present actions. There is no evidence that achieved full reputational recovery by 2024. The timeline ultimately reflects a thematic evolution from immediate crisis to persistent legitimacy management within the humanitarian sector.

Additionally, the quantitative data in figure 1 gives more insight into how different political orientations of news outlets may have emphasized different themes. Right-leaning news outlets more often emphasized on the themes reputation & legitimacy management and donor dynamics & financial pressure. Whereas left-leaning news outlets reported more often on accountability & governance failures and internal positioning. These patterns suggest that

the political nature of news outlets plays a role in constructing narratives around humanitarian accountability.

The following sections will explore each theme in depth. All themes will be discussed in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework on which this study is based on. Where relevant, sub-themes will be addressed, and both qualitative insights and supporting quantitative data will be integrated to provide a robust, and in dept interpretation on how different portrayals in the media shape Oxfam’s corporate reputation.

Figure 1
Occurrence of themes between left and right leaning media outlets



4.2 Theme 1: accountability & governance failures

The accountability & governance failures theme was found as the most occurring theme across the data, appearing in 43 out of the 44 analyzed articles. The two sub-themes that emerged and support these findings are leadership & structural weakness and institutional & ethical responsibility. This theme reflects on how the media presents both internal and external concerns regarding Oxfam’s leadership accountability, ethical responsibility, and institutional procedures, or lack thereof in preventing and addressing harmful situations. It captures the structural and ethical failures of Oxfam, especially after times of crises. These findings highlight the weak governance structures and inadequate oversight of Oxfam presented by the media. This aligns with critical perspectives on NGO governance that stress

the need for embedded accountability systems (Belal et al., 2023, p. 2). Especially in organizations that operate in the humanitarian field. Together, the findings demonstrate how accountability failures intersect with reputational management and emphasize how organizational culture and structure prevent meaningful accountability. In relation to the main research question, this theme reflects on the internal challenges faced by Oxfam, and it also demonstrates how these failures were leveraged by the media to construct certain narratives about distrust, hypocrisy, and institutional decay. These portrayals have significant implications that impact the public perception and organizational legitimacy of Oxfam.

4.2.1 Leadership and structural weakness

Throughout the data, several articles emphasized how Oxfam's leadership staff failed to take the adequate accountability measures, like establishing and enforcing the safeguarding policies in times of crisis. They not only created a culture of ignorance around misconduct, but they also actively tried to conceal internal problems. These failures were not portrayed as isolated incidents. But rather as signs of systemic issues within Oxfam's organizational culture. This sub-theme is about the critique of the media on Oxfam's leadership decisions, questioning their decisions in times of crisis. For example, one news article highlighted: "Oxfam was said to lack the robust policies and procedures to tackle the issues and whistleblowing arrangements were 'deficient to the point that staff morale is compromised at times'" (O'Neill, S., 2019, paragra. 9).

This news article focussed on the fundamental leadership shortcomings of Oxfam. This connects to (Goffman's (1974) framing theory since the media systematically emphasized and highlighted these structural failures to be the main cause of scandals. This reflects on how the media represents moral framing of the Oxfam's failures. The media narratives not only report on misconduct within the organization, but they also they frame it as the result of internal dysfunction. This way, misconduct is not seen as an isolated event, but as a symptom of a large-scale leadership crisis.

This type of causal framing plays a critical role in shaping public understanding of organizational accountability (Gibelman en Gelman, 2001, p. 54). Instead of holding the individual employees that were responsible for the crisis accountable, the media chose a narrative that emphasized that the blame of moral failure lied at the top of the organization. Therefore, shifting the focus from individual misconduct to organizational responsibility. Creating the idea that the top of the organization had permitted impunity. By the repetition of

words like “cover-up”, “containment”, and “failure to act” in article headlines and paragraph titles the media chooses to define the crisis not as an isolated event, but as the predictable result of institutional neglect.

4.2.2 Institutional and ethical responsibility

The second sub-theme broadens the critique from internal mismanagement, to ethical failure on an institutional level. Oxfam was not only portrayed as structurally weak, but also morally inconsistent. Not holding themselves to their norms and values. This is particularly problematic given its role as NGO and player in the humanitarian aid field. Oxfam has a very public stance on justice, women’s rights and other societal problems. However, the media has often reported on events that do not align with Oxfam’s public stance. Therefore, criticising Oxfam and calling them out for not aligning with their public stance. For example, one news article said: “As an international organisation fighting for women’s rights we have a special responsibility to practise what we preach and protect our staff, volunteers and beneficiaries from sexual harassment and abuse” (Watt, H., 2017, para. 6).

This critique on Oxfam not aligning with their public stance relates to Fombrun & Van Riel’s (2004) reputation management theory. According to this theory, NGO’s reputation depends on whether their public values align with their organizational behavior. However, in Oxfam’s case, the media often reports on events in which Oxfam’s values do not align with their organizational behavior. The ethical contradiction that is highlighted in these news articles exacerbates the loss of organizational legitimacy. Because according to Suchman (1995, p. 574), organizational legitimacy is socially constructed and based on the perception that NGO’s actions align with the norms and values of society. Which in the context of this sub-theme, Oxfam’s actions do not align and therefore lose part of their organizational legitimacy.

From the structural functionalist perspective (Durkheim, 1893), Oxfam who has the role of a social institution, is expected to act with the same moral values as it promotes. However, failing to meet these expectations contributes to dysfunction within the broader humanitarian system. Since trust in NGOs is essential for them to operate effectively and maintain public support, by losing trust this compromises their ability to operate effectively. Trust is also not automatically granted to NGOs, this must be continually earned through accountability and transparency (Hudson, 2001, p. 332). Therefore, the media plays an important institutional role by holding Oxfam accountable for their actions and reinforcing societal norms. Anderson and Meyer (1975, p. 13) argue that the media’s societal function

includes shaping public perception and preserve ethical standards. In relation to this study, the media coverage that focuses on leadership and ethical failures can be interpreted as a corrective mechanism within a larger societal system. However, friction emerges between media and NGOs (Jayasinghe, 2011, p .2). While the media fulfils its function by exposing Oxfam's organizational failure, it simultaneously damages Oxfam's organizational legitimacy, potentially hindering them from effectively fulfilling their role in society of them providing humanitarian aid.

4.3 Theme 2: Crisis & organizational misconduct

The theme that occurred second most in the data was crisis & organizational misconduct. This theme occurred in 41 out of 44 analyzed articles and is divided into three interconnected sub-themes: misconduct, crisis response, and organizational scandal. Together, they reflect on how Oxfam's internal failures triggered external media crises. Shaping public narratives about the organization's legitimacy, accountability, and ethical accountability. This theme not only reflects on Oxfam's misconduct itself, such as sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse of power, but it also reflects on how those acts were perceived, narrated, and responded to by the public. In this theme, it is uncovered what role the media plays when reporting on misconduct and crises. Together, the findings of this theme reflect on the consequences of how crises and misconduct are mediated through the news. By covering on organizational misconduct, the media creates an event that causes an organization's reputational crisis. This in time will reshape internal dynamics and external stakeholder relations. These findings align with theoretical perspectives on crisis management and organizational legitimacy. Which imply that accountability can be performative when aiming to regain public trust, rather than addressing structural causes (Svedin, 2012, p. 15). Together, these insights are important for understanding how negative portrayals in the media interact with trust, funding, and management of Oxfam's reputation.

4.3.1 Misconduct

This theme occurred in 34 articles, making it a prominent sub-theme. The sub-theme of misconduct includes a range of harmful behaviors, including sexual exploitation, harassment, workplace bullying, abuse of power, and data manipulation. In the media, this behavior was described as both individual and systemic. Indicating that there is a systemic pattern of organizational failure, spanning over multiple years and places. It points to a toxic organizational culture that discouraged reporting on misconduct and enabled repeated abuses. As described in one article: "Claims of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, bullying,

fraud, and breaches of safeguarding procedures... had built up over years with an organisational culture that made it difficult and dangerous for employees to report misconduct” (Dodds, P., 2021, para. 1).

The language used in this news article points to an institutionalized form of misconduct. A workplace environment in which misconduct is enabled not only by individuals, but also by organizational norms. This links to the framing theory of Goffman (1974). News articles consistently used problem and moral framing, selecting and highlighting aspects of Oxfam’s organizational culture that suggested deep-rooted and long-term ethical decay. By using these kind of frames, it enables the audiences to interpret the events of misconduct not just as scandals, but as symptoms of a morally compromised organizational system. These frames also connect to Fombrun & Van Riel’s (2004) reputation management theory, since they influence Oxfam’s corporate reputation and perceived legitimacy. When this trust is broken by constant media exposure of systemic misconduct, reputational damage is often severe and long-lasting. Especially when it comes down to NGOs because they rely on public trust other than profit-sector organization (Archambeault & Webber, 2018, p. 30). Because in the nonprofit sector, reputation not only acts as a function of trust, but it is also closely related to moral integrity and ethical behavior. The lack of Oxfam’s social responsibility that is portrayed by these frames causes the public to lose trust in their ability to uphold their high ethical standards.

4.3.2 Crisis response

The crisis response sub-theme captures how Oxfam, as an NGO, responded to allegations of misconduct and media scrutiny. These actions included both proactive and reactive responses, such as launching internal investigations, introducing safeguarding measures, issuing public apologies, and communicating reforms. However, the media took a critical position and portrayed these responses often as insufficient, delayed, or strategically performative, rather than a genuine attempt for institutional reform. The media highlighted the gap between Oxfam’s stated values and its crisis response. Portraying the organization as reluctant and not willing to take full responsibility. As one article wrote: “The organization said on Friday that its 2011 investigation had “resulted in the creation of our dedicated Safeguarding Team and a confidential ‘whistle-blowing’ hotline...” (Pérez-Peña, R., 2018, para. 14). While such statements might aim to demonstrate transparency and immediate action, other articles directly challenged their adequacy. A recurring critique was that perpetrators were relocated rather than disciplined. Suggesting that their crisis response was

aimed towards containment rather than accountability, so this article says: “In several examples, alleged attackers had been transferred to different countries, rather than facing discipline...” (Watt, H., 2017, para. 12). These conflicting narratives connect to reputation management theory (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). Based on their theory, corporate reputation is shaped by the consistently performing and aligning values, behavior, and communication. In Oxfam’s case, the misalignment between their humanitarian responsibility and their misplaced crisis response, created a gap in their credibility. Stakeholders question whether Oxfam could still be trusted to uphold to their mission of delivering humanitarian aid. This loss of trust is particularly damaging in the nonprofit sector, where organizational legitimacy is highly connected to perceptions of moral integrity and transparency. This relates to Suchman’s (1995) concept of organizational legitimacy. One-time failures might be forgiven, if an NGO’s historical legitimacy is strong. However, if an organization repeatedly handled crises inadequate, like here in Oxfam’s case, it can increase reputational damage. By persistent negatively reporting on crisis responses, Oxfam’s failures are not seen as a one-time failure, but as systemic organizational failure.

Besides, the media choosing to keep on reporting on these negative crisis responses, they are setting the agenda for the public. Linking this to the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), Oxfam’s crisis response became a popular topic, not only because of the responses themselves, but because the media deliberately chose to prioritize and repeated this issue in their articles. Consistently reporting on Oxfam’s actions lifted the crisis response from a secondary topic to a central evaluative lens.

4.3.3 Organizational Scandal

The organizational scandal sub-theme is about highly visible and sensationalized incidents. This includes events such as the Haiti sex scandal. This scandal received disproportionate media attention and caused a reputational crisis. While the sub-theme of “misconduct” reflects on the behaviors that violated internal and ethical norms, this sub-theme refers to how these behaviors became widely visible, sensationalized, and symbolically significant among the public. The scandalization process that is largely driven by the media, transformed acts of abuse and negligence into catchy headlines. Altering how the organization was perceived and evaluated by their stakeholders. These scandals created often morally shocking revelations, not just about wrongdoing, but about the hypocrisy and betrayal of Oxfam’s humanitarian values. In many right-leaning outlets, the articles emphasized on provocative narratives:

“They were throwing big parties with prostitutes. These girls were wearing Oxfam T-shirts, running around half-naked, it was a like a full-on Caligula orgy. It was unbelievable. It was crazy. At one party there were at least five girls and two of them had Oxfam white T-shirts on. These men used to talk about holding ‘young meat barbecues’.” (O’Neill, S., 2018, para. 8).

This description is not only disturbing, but it is also highly symbolic. The use of Oxfam T-shirts, the Roman language of "Caligula orgy", and the commodification of women ("young meat") intensified the moral outrage. These narratives illustrate how scandals are not just merely reported on, they are framed and dramatized. As goal, to provoke emotional and moral responses from the public. In these articles, Oxfam is portrayed not only as negligent but as deeply hypocritical because it betrayed the very values it claimed to uphold. This can be explained by the framing theory (Goffman, 1974). The media emphasizes particular elements to create moral evaluations and promote particular interpretations of certain events. By laying the emphasis on scandals, Oxfam was not just portrayed as having failed to stick to their values. They were presented as having betrayed the very ideals they stood for, such as protection of the vulnerable, gender equality, and anti-exploitation. This portrayal of moral betrayal is particularly damaging for NGOs, whose legitimacy is built not only on performance but on perceived integrity. This links directly to reputation management theory (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), which claims that trust and emotional appeal are most important to maintain stakeholder support. Scandal stories like these, aim at the public's emotional appeal, often resulting in long-term erosion of public and donor trust.

4.4 Theme 3: media representation & public discourse

The theme of media representation & public discourse was found in 35 out of 44 articles and explores how the media has constructed and shaped the public discourse around Oxfam. Especially during and after its organizational crises. The media, being a key institution in modern society, has the power to not only spread information but to actively shape public perception, emotional responses and societal expectations. This theme is important to understand the mechanism through which reputational damage occurs. It is split further into three sub-themes: media and public narrative, public reaction and framing and political influence. Together, they reflect on how media institutions construct the public meaning of Oxfam's crisis and in time shape their reputational consequences. They help to explain not only what happened to Oxfam's public image, but rather how and why

reputational consequences unfolded in the way they did. Illustrating how media discourse has become a mediating force between organizational behavior and reputational outcome.

4.4.1 Media and public narrative

The media and public narrative sub-theme captures how media outlets construct and spread narratives about Oxfam during and after crises. By doing so, they turned internal misconduct into a public matter of moral, political, and institutional concern, making it up for debate in the public sphere. Together, the insights gathered from this theme will explain which factor plays a big roll on how a scandal is reported on. The media outlets that presented these narratives, did more than just report on the stated facts. Instead, they also shaped public interpretation. Linking Oxfam's actions to broader societal norms, and thus ultimately contributing to how the organization's reputation and legitimacy were perceived. The analysis reveals significant variation in tone, emphasis, and interpretation across news outlets. These differences reflect on broader ideological and political orientations. While some news articles focused on factual reporting and criticising the institution, others chose for interpretive framing that emphasized scandal, moral failure and hypocrisy. This comes from the understanding that media representation is not neutral or passive (Allweiss et al., 2014, p. 615). It rather involves editorial choices and interpretation that collectively produces meaning around a topic. In Oxfam's case, the media has selected particular parts of the crisis to highlight while downplaying on others. These deliberate choices shape the dominant public narrative about an organization.

From the data, it became clear that political orientation of a news outlet played a role in which parts of crisis were highlighted and which parts were downplayed. This can be explained by framing theory and agenda-setting theory. In the Oxfam case, right-leaning media prioritized scandal and moral failure. Framing crisis as a betrayal of public trust and ideological hypocrisy. One right leaning article wrote: "They preach morality to the rest of the world while covering up sex parties and abuse in their own ranks" (Pérez-Peña, R., 2018, para. 15). While left-leaning outlets put the focus on structural issues, framing misconduct as the outcome of governance failures and systemic inequality. As one article wrote: "This was not simply a matter of individual wrongdoing but a symptom of a wider cultural and institutional failure to protect vulnerable people" (Ratcliffe, R., 2019, para. 13).

Through agenda-setting, the scandal remained in the eye of the public, while framing shaped interpretations of its meaning. According to Entman (1993), framing defines problems, assigns blame, and proposes solutions. However, these tasks are carried out

differently across different ideologies. As a result, making the public discourse around Oxfam polarized. These competing narratives illustrate how political orientation guides media logic. Ultimately influencing reputational outcomes, stakeholder trust, and NGO legitimacy.

4.4.2 Public Reaction

The sub-theme public reaction captures the emotional, moral, and behavioral responses of the public and stakeholders, to the media coverage on Oxfam's organizational scandals. Beyond journalistic framing, many articles reported on the public's emotional and moral responses to the scandals. This includes the expression of moral outrage, loss of trust, donor withdrawal and call for reform. These reactions were substantiated and shaped by the way the media framed the crisis. This highlights the interconnectedness between public perception, media narrative, and institutional legitimacy. One of the most severe of public reactions was the mass withdrawal of donor support in 2018 after revealing the sexual exploitation in Haiti. As reported: "Goldring tells MPs on the international development select committee that the charity has lost 7,000 regular donors since the scandal emerged" (Gayle, 2018, para. 14).

This is a direct example of how reputational damage, translates into tangible consequences for NGOs. The particular kind of organization whose operational effectiveness deeply relies on public trust and financial support. This reputation crisis was not only symbolic. It had tangible consequences like undermined funding, loss of legitimacy in the public eye, and loss of credibility among institutional partners. From a reputation management perspective (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), public reactions are not only a reflection of internal organizational behavior, but also the result of how those behaviors are portrayed and interpreted by the media. Thus, the emotional responses from stakeholders, directly impact an NGO's reputation. Therefore, making organizational reputation dependend on organizational actions as well on external narratives.

In Oxfam's case, a certain tone of public reaction was frequently emphasized in the articles. Words like betrayal, shame, and disgust were frequently used to describe how the public felt, in response to the crisis. This connects directly to Goffman's (1974) framing theory, which suggests that emotional and moral reactions are not simply spontaneous. They are rather produced and directed by how issues are framed in communication to the public. Media articles that emphasized took on this negative tone when reporting on Oxfam's, created powerful moral dissonance. This kind of framing acted as a moral trigger, that led stakeholders to withdraw support or publicly denounce the organization.

Agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) played a big role in this process. The Oxfam crisis remained on the public agenda for an excessive amount of time. This was due to continued media attention, follow-up investigations and opinion pieces. As agenda-setting theory suggests, the media did not tell the public what to think, but rather on what to think about. By keeping the emphasis on the Haiti scandal, it turned the Oxfam scandal into an example for broader debates around NGO legitimacy, accountability, and ethics.

4.4.3 Framing and political influence

The sub-theme of framing and political influence sheds light on the political divergence that was found between right- and left-leaning outlets. It reveals how media coverage on Oxfam was not only shaped by journalistic choices and facts. It uncovered that media narratives are also deeply influenced by the political orientations of media outlets. From the data, it became clear that right-leaning media often highlighted topics around scandal, hypocrisy, and moral failure. These outlets portrayed NGOs as ideologically driven and morally hypocritical. Focussing on Oxfam's alleged decadence, misuse of donor funds, and perceived leftist bias. These media outlets also used emotional language, dramatized events and framed Oxfam's misconduct as evidence of institutional rot and liberal elitism. This kind of portrayal reinforces public distrust in humanitarian institutions (Kepplinger et al., 2012, p. 22). Besides, Oxfam's efforts to apologise were often dismissed. Their responses were portrayed as inadequate or performative, enhancing the negative narrative and hindering their reputational reparation.

On the contrary, left-leaning media often portrayed the crisis as the consequence of flawed systems. This includes ineffective safeguarding policies, post-colonial power structures, and internal accountability gaps. While these portrayals are still critical, they often avoided moral sensationalism. Instead, they emphasized on systemic reform and the preservation of humanitarian values. Giving Oxfam the space for apologies, restructuring efforts, and safeguarding reforms. Providing a potential pathway to rebuild their credibility

The difference in framing reflects on what Benkler et al. (2018, p. 75) describe as 'ideologically motivated media ecosystems'. Political orientation not only influences choices on what news to cover on, but it shapes the entire construction of events. In this case, both left- and right-leaning outlets reported on Oxfam's Haiti scandal. However, they framed its causes and consequences differently. One as evidence of elite hypocrisy, the other as a governance failure within a troubled humanitarian system. This links directly to Goffman's (1974) framing theory, as media outlets with different political alignments constructed

different narratives around the same events. This political divide also connects to the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The political background of a media outlet influences what issues are prioritized, how frequently they are covered and with what intensity. Thus, from a structural functionalist point of view (Durkheim, 1893), while the media provides society with key functions such as informing the public, reinforcing norms, and holding institutions accountable, this function can significantly differ depending on political background.

This political divide is important for two reasons. First, it affects how an organization's reputation is perceived. Since different audiences, consume different narratives from news articles about the same organization. Secondly, it demonstrates the interdependency and friction between the media and NGOs as social institutions (Jayasinghe, 2011, p .2). Whereas NGOs rely on the media for visibility and legitimacy but can also become vulnerable to media narratives (Powers, 2016, p. 490). Especially when those narratives are shaped by underlying ideological interests. For NGOs, this means that there is a difficult communication landscape. In which restoring legitimacy depends not only on organizational reform but also on navigating the political aspect of media representation. Altogether, this sub-theme contributes to answering the research question on how media narratives influence NGO reputation. Because it explains that the media are not neutral actors in spreading news. Rather, they are institutional actors whose political orientations reflects on their news reporting. Thus, affecting how NGOs are represented, and ultimately, how they are perceived by the public and stakeholders.

4.5 Theme 4: internal positioning

While the previous themes examined how media narratives exposed, interpreted, and politicized Oxfam's crisis, the theme of internal positioning that was found in 28 articles, focuses on how Oxfam itself responded to these reputational challenges. It highlights the agency that an organization itself has, in navigating its own reputational recovery in response to external scrutiny. Besides, it also reflects on how its efforts to rebuild trust were communicated and perceived. These efforts of Oxfam were subject to interpretation, amplification, and skepticism by media outlets. Thus, these efforts form are part of the broader reputational narrative. This theme is split in two interrelated sub-themes: reflection and rebuilding and organizational direction. Together, they reflect on Oxfam's attempts to reclaim legitimacy and reshape its damaged identity. Explaining how Oxfam efforts to repair its reputation define its long-term identity. By doing so, this theme provides insight into how

internal narratives intersect with external ones. Reflecting on how reputational recovery is negotiated between organizational strategy and media framing.

4.4.1 Reflection and rebuilding

The sub-theme reflection and rebuilding reflects on Oxfam's attempts to publicly acknowledge its internal failures and structural issues that enabled misconduct. This being the beginning of internal reform aimed at restoring public trust. Because of the widespread media scrutiny and the following reputational damage, Oxfam responded with institutional self-reflection. A strategic and operational response designed to express accountability and responsibility as a commitment to change. This response was expressed in public apologies, official statements and the implementation of new safeguarding policies. A quote from an Oxfam representative from a 2017 article captures this self-reflection: "We continue to learn and seek to improve not just in how we handle complaints but also in changing the culture in which we work to prevent the abuse of power in the first place" (Watt, H., 2017, para. 5).

From the perspective of reputation management theory (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), this kind of messaging represents a form of reputational repair. Since reputation, especially for NGOs relies on moral credibility, public trust, and alignment with societal values. When these are called into question, like after Oxfam's crisis, organizations must actively try to rebuild their reputation and rebuild public trust. This includes acknowledging harm, communicate change, and commit to ethical standards. This reflection process is not only done internally but it must also be performed publicly. Since stakeholders require visible signs of accountability. Oxfam's institutional self-reflection also connects to Suchman's (1995, pp. 577-583) theory on organizational legitimacy. In particular, the idea of pragmatic and moral legitimacy. By publicly recognizing its failures and committing to reform, Oxfam attempts to reaffirm its moral legitimacy, for example by acting according to the shared norms and values. While also rebuilding pragmatic legitimacy, for example showing responsibility to stakeholders. This is of great importance in the nonprofit sector, where legitimacy is needed for operation and support. The act of institutional self-reflection links directly to the framing theory (Goffman, 1974). Since it can be seen as an attempt to reframe its crisis. Going from having a major internal crisis to reforming and becoming more resilient. These efforts served not only as damage control but as an opportunity to reposition. However, the effectiveness of this reflective strategy can be questionable. Since the effectiveness was not uniform across all media. As explained in 4.4.3 framing and political influence, right-leaning media outlets often

dismissed and minimized these internal changes. Instead, framing them as superficial and reactive rather than substantive.

Thus, institutional self-reflection is a strategic and symbolic effort by Oxfam in response to reputational crisis, by owning its failures and committing to transformation. It demonstrates how NGOs, in response to crisis, attempt to rebuild legitimacy. However, this sub-theme also shows that the success of this effort is not solely determined by the organization itself. But also, on how those efforts are received, framed, and interpreted in the media.

4.4.2 Organizational Direction

The sub-theme organizational direction captures how Oxfam, after having endured a scandal and reputational damages, has redefined its long-term identity, restructured its operations and restored its public image as a humanitarian institution. Whilst “reflection and rebuilding” addresses short-term reform and accountability, this sub-theme focuses on the long-term strategies that Oxfam has initiated to reclaim its legitimacy and resilience from the public. This involved restating its mission, restructuring its global operations, and redefining its values. This reorganization process was covered in several articles for example: “Oxfam has begun a major restructuring of its international services, including a significant number of redundancies, the charity's finance director has said” (Civil Society, 2017, para. 1). This type of messaging makes Oxfam out as to be strategically adaptive. They do not just react to public pressure, but they rather proactively reshape their structure to align with a new ethical standard. This shows the public and stakeholders that Oxfam is not only capable of reform, but that it is willing to evolve. This connects to Fombrun & Van Riel’s (2004) Reputation Quotient Model. The organization attempted to project resilience, a key component of reputational recovery according to reputation management theory. By demonstrating change at both cultural and operational levels, Oxfam sought to signal that it could once again be trusted to fulfil its humanitarian role. These efforts to restore trust and realigning with stakeholder expectations, target several core dimensions of the Reputation Quotient model, including vision and leadership, emotional appeal, and social responsibility. For example, Oxfam publicly acknowledged its leadership failures and initiated internal restructuring. While aiming to for ethical renewal and strategic redirection. By making these leadership changes and safeguarding policy revisions, the organization expressed that it had both the competence and the moral compass to guide the institution through crisis. This repositioning is not only about public perception, it is also about organizational survival. Because of the

intensified media scrutiny, Oxfam had to navigate a complex environment in which legitimacy was fragile and contingent. The repositioning process not only became necessary to maintain public support, but also to keep the right to act as a credible humanitarian actor (Sargeant & Lee, 2004, p. 187).

This all connects to the structural functionalism paradigm (Durkheim, 1893). It offers a valuable point of view to interpret this sub-theme. Within this paradigm, institutions such as NGOs are expected to fulfil their function by providing essential services and acting on shared values. However, when their moral authority is disrupted, a restabilization process must take place. They must self-correct when those roles are disrupted (Chen & Otubanjo, 2013, p. 333). Therefore, Oxfam's repositioning process around reform and direction reflects on institutional logic of self-preservation.

4.6 Theme 5: reputation & legitimacy management

The theme of reputation & legitimacy management, appearing in 22 news articles, focuses on how Oxfam's corporate reputation and organizational legitimacy are both challenged and defended throughout the crisis period and aftermath. Themes one through four addressed the causes of reputational decline and the media's role in shaping narratives. However, this theme focuses on how Oxfam and external stakeholders attempted to protect, restore, or challenge the organization's reputation in the eyes of the public. The sub-themes that this theme is split into, reputation crisis and reputation strategy will highlight two key processes. One, the reputational crisis as a result of negative media framing and public backlash. And two, the reputational strategies developed by Oxfam to restore legitimacy including institutional reform, public apologies, and narrative reframing. These strategies are not only internal responses to protect their reputation, they are part of a strategic interaction between Oxfam and the media. In which the organization tries to reshape how it is understood and positioned within the public sphere. The importance of this theme is that it shows that reputation is not simply a gathering of an organization's actions. It is also a reflection of how those actions are interpreted, communicated, and evaluated across different social and political contexts, extending on Lammers and Guth's (2013, p. 223) research. Offering important insight into the reputational dynamics that NGOs must navigate in an era of heightened scrutiny and declining institutional trust.

4.6.1 Reputation crisis

The sub-theme reputation crisis reveals the immediate and long-term damage of

Oxfam's credibility, trustworthiness and moral authority after times of crises. Especially after the heavily mediated Haiti scandal in 2018. While Oxfam has endured several crises, this crisis has been marked as the multi-dimensional collapse of Oxfam. It not only affected how Oxfam was perceived as an organization but also as a moral actor, humanitarian actor and representative of society's values. This sub-theme demonstrates that reputation is not just a static resource it rather is fragile and a constructed outcome of both organizational behavior and public narrative. The media coverage of this crisis played a big role in triggering and sustaining this reputational decline. In the crisis emotionally evocative language was used, like "orgies," and "young meat barbecues." These portrayals were not just describing the events, they were used to shock, scandalize, and morally implicate Oxfam. Doing so, undermining the organization's ethical credibility and activating widespread public outrage. This caused key stakeholders to distance themselves from the organization. A 2018 article, that came out after the scandal that represents the public fallout: "The actor Minnie Driver, who was one of 16 celebrity patrons for Oxfam, says she is withdrawing her support 'in no uncertain terms' after working with the charity for more than 20 years" (Gayle, 2018, para. 5).

This withdrawal of support from high-profile stakeholders demonstrates the severe loss of emotional appeal and moral legitimacy (Leardini et al., 2018, p. 521). These two being dimensions from Fombrun and Van Riel's (2004) Reputation Quotient model. Affecting Oxfam's entire core as a trusted humanitarian institution. This highlights the dynamic nature of reputational damage. Legitimacy is based on a history of behavior and not a single event (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Therefore, legitimacy is at its most vulnerable when stakeholders interpret organizational failures as repeated organizational patterns, rather than one-time accidental errors. Thus, Oxfam's case illustrates how repeated moral framing can transform an isolated scandal into a generalized crisis of legitimacy. Because in the NGO sector, reputation is fragile, legitimacy is performative, and both are deeply depended on public narrative.

4.6.2 Reputation strategy

The sub-theme reputation strategy refers to the deliberate efforts of Oxfam to manage, repair, and eventually restore its reputation after having legitimacy crisis. These efforts include reflection on its communications, policy and structural reforms, leadership statements and symbolic actions. Attempting to gain a new institutional identity that aligned with stakeholder expectations of transparency, integrity, and responsibility. These efforts correspond with several key dimensions of Fombrun and Van Riel's (2004) reputation strategy aiming at reputational repair. A strategy in effort to restore trust and realign stakeholder

perceptions with the organization's values and mission. This strategy targeted the vision and leadership, social responsibility and emotional appeal dimension. It targeted vision and leadership because Oxfam held senior representatives accountable and introduced new safeguarding roles. It also targeted social responsibility by restating the organization's commitment to anti-exploitation and gender equality. Lately it targeted emotional appeal because Oxfam emphasized transparency, humility, and a willingness to change.

This strategy connects to Suchman (1995, p. 588) concept of "repair legitimacy work". That proposes that actions must be designed to restore stakeholder confidence after a violation of institutional norms. Oxfam attempted to alter specific systemic failures while also trying to reframe the scandal as a turning point. Positioning itself as an institution capable of reform. This reframing effort also aligns with Goffman's (1974) framing theory. Because it is a deliberate effort of Oxfam to shift the interpretation from disgrace to recovery. However, the effectiveness of this strategy is highly depended on external actors, especially the media. As presented in in theme 3: media representation & public discourse, media outlets interpret and spread Oxfam's recovery efforts through an ideological lens. Right-leaning media often portrayed these efforts as insufficient. As efforts of "damage control", rather than genuine transformation. Whereas left-leaning outlets framed the strategy as part of a broader cultural reckoning within the humanitarian sector. Acknowledging Oxfam's willingness to take immediate action.

This tension underscores the insight that reputation is not controlled solely by the organization but is constructed through interaction with external institutions. Even the most comprehensive reform attempts can be delegitimized, ignored, or misrepresented. Because they depend on the political orientation narrative on which they are constructed. Thus, presenting a challenge for NGOs, whose legitimacy is not based solely on their actions but on how their values, intentions, and transformations are perceived.

4.7 Theme 6: donor dynamics & financial pressure

The theme of donor dynamics & financial pressure was found in 19 news articles. It emphasizes that reputational crises are not only symbolic but that they have substantial consequences. This theme focuses on the financial and operational repercussions of Oxfam's legitimacy crisis. Particularly on how the scandal affected relations with donors, governments, individuals and corporate partners. This theme is split into two interlinked sub-themes: donor criticism and loss and financial risk. Together they build on the previous discussions on media framing, internal positioning, and legitimacy repair. Showing how reputational damage caused

by media narratives, can result in shifts of donor behavior and financial instability. Reshaping the NGO's ability to operate effectively and sustain its mission.

4.7.1 Donor criticism and loss

The sub-theme donor criticism and loss encompasses the donor's reactions from both institutions and individuals, following the media exposure on the misconduct scandal. Their reaction was characterized with public criticism, moral disapproval and financial withdrawal. Reflecting on the widespread perception that Oxfam had fundamentally failed in upholding its ethical obligations. These donor responses were not isolated acts of disappointment instead, they were highly symbolic gestures. Because they were often made in public forums and media statements. Expressing their loss of trust in the organization while withdrawing their financial support. An example that demonstrates this includes the UK government. They not only froze Oxfam's funding but did so very publicly. Expressing concerns about organizational accountability, transparency, and safeguarding failures. Similarly, the European Commission issued formal warnings, and thousands of individual donors cancelled their contributions. This reflects on the intensity of reputational fallout while also causing a broader shift in donor behavior. A shift towards increased scrutiny, conditionality and reputational risk aversion. As one news article stated: "More than 7,000 people cancelled their donations in the days after the revelations. Many cited a loss of trust in the organization's values and leadership" (Elgot, J., & McVeigh, K. (2019), para. 1).

These donor responses directly connect perceived legitimacy and resource access. According to Suchman's (1995) concept organizational legitimacy, NGOs must maintain their moral alignment with society's values and also maintain pragmatic credibility in the eyes of stakeholders. When donors perceive an NGO as a reputational liability, either due to misconduct or crisis mismanagement they may withdraw funding to protect their own image (Deloffre and Schmitz, 2019, p. 607). These reactions were amplified by media framing. They portrayed donor withdrawal not only as administrative decisions but as moral judgments. This aligns with framing theory (Goffman, 1974). because the portraying donor criticism as a rejection of Oxfam's moral integrity, intensified the reputational damage. Thus, these narratives intensified the reputational damage. By reinforcing the perception that Oxfam had violated not just operational standards but fundamental humanitarian principles.

From a reputation management theory perspective (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004),

donor withdrawal revealed vulnerabilities in three core dimensions of Oxfam's perceived reputation. Donors expressed not only disapproval on Oxfam's actions but also expressed a sense of betrayal. Indicating that the reputational damage affected the trust and moral connection that many supporters felt toward the organization (Kim, 2025, pp. 1-2). Affecting the organization's emotional appeal. Secondly, the criticism was mostly aimed at the mismanagement of senior management. Affecting the organization's vision and leadership. Lastly, Oxfam's credibility as an ethical and justice-driven actor was taken into question. Undermining the very reason why the public supported the organization. Affecting the organization's social responsibility. Altogether, this sub-theme reflects how stakeholders with financial and symbolic power reacted to Oxfam's reputational loss. These responses were shaped by media narratives, guided by moral expectations and expressed through public actions. This contributed to the crisis being deepened. Demonstrating that legitimacy is not only lost through scandal but through the withdrawal of trust by those who support and enable the organization to exist in the first place.

4.7.2 Financial risk

The sub-theme financial risk captures the vulnerability that Oxfam had face to after the misconduct scandal. Not only because of the immediate donor withdrawal but also because of the long-term financial uncertainty that was cause by reputational damage. In the case of NGOs like Oxfam, financial risk is not just simply about a decline in income. It is connected to the fact that the organization depends on external trust (Hudson, 2001, p. 348). Trust coming from governments, individual donors and corporate partners. When trust is lost due to scandal, the risk is not only reputational but also systemic and financial. The organization's ability to gain income, secure future funding and maintain long-term programs becomes uncertain (Zhang et al., 2024, p.3). One example of a news article that clearly captured this uncertainty: "Oxfam is facing a funding shortfall of millions of pounds following the scandal, forcing it to consider closing or scaling down operations in multiple countries" (Mendick, 2019, para. 17). From a reputation management perspective (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004), this financial risk influences several key dimensions of reputation management. In particularly vision and leadership, social responsibility and emotional appeal. These are critical for donor and institutional support. Once these reputational dimensions are compromised, future funding becomes unpredictable. Causing uncertainty in budgets and making long term project commitments difficult to sustain. This undermines the ability of NGOs to operate strategically and have a long-term vision. This this connects to the

institutional theory (Haack, 2012, p.51). Which proposes that organizations under legitimacy pressure often face a paradox. While they must invest in reforms to restore trust, these investments are due at a time when resources are reduced. Creating tension between their mission to regain trust and deliver legitimate work. In Oxfam's case, the reputational crisis forced the organization to prioritize safeguarding and governance reforms that were crucial for reputational recovery. However, this came with the financial cost of scaling back on humanitarian operations. Thus, financial risk introduced a strategic dilemma: the need to demonstrate accountability while also operating with reduced resources and visibility. As some offices closed and programs were cut, Oxfam's presence in the humanitarian field diminished. Which in turn risked weakening its credibility as a leading global NGO. This illustrates how a decline in reputation can create a cycle of financial and symbolic weakening, that reinforces itself. Because less funding leads to having fewer programs, which leads to having less impact, which in turn then might reinforce donor hesitancy, especially if there still circulates a lot of negative media coverage.

Finally, from a structural functionalist (Durkheim, 1893) point of view, Oxfam's financial risk can be seen as part of a broader disruption to the normative functioning of institutions in civil society. Since NGOs are expected to fulfil certain essential social functions, such as delivering aid, striving for justice and providing ethical leadership. When financial risk threatens the organization's ability to fulfil these roles, it is not just the organization that suffers. The social system that relies on them to provide these functions also experiences the consequences. Thus, in this case, financial instability is not only practical, rather it also reflects on a deeper crisis that affects the moral and operational foundations of humanitarian work.

Altogether, this sub-theme demonstrates that reputational crises in NGOs have deep rooted financial consequences. They affect not only immediate present income but also future stability, credibility, and operational effectiveness. As this case of Oxfam illustrates, the loss of trust triggers not just withdrawal of funds, but wider implications on financial uncertainty and institutional fragility. Therefore, financial risk becomes both a consequence and an enhancer of reputational harm. Revealing that trust, legitimacy, and sustainability are deeply embedded within the NGO sector.

4.8 Connecting themes

Every individual theme that has emerged in this chapter contributed essential

insights for understanding how Oxfam's reputation was destabilized and contested due to media portrayals. Altogether, they reveal a dynamic interplay between internal crisis, external framing, stakeholder perception, and material consequence. Crisis and misconduct exposed Oxfam to reputational vulnerability in the first place. This was then exacerbated by governance failures that revealed underlying institutional weaknesses. Media coverage further intensified the situation by moralizing and polarizing the narrative, framing the crisis in ideological and ethical ways. Although attempts were made by Oxfam for both narrative and structural recovery. Its reputation management attempts were often perceived as performative and met with skepticism. As a result, donor support declined leading to the reputational crisis being transformed into tangible financial pressure, making the organization's challenges even harder. The interconnectedness of these themes suggests that NGO reputation is not just a linear function of organizational integrity. It is rather shaped through a complex process of perception, interpretation and reaction. Which unfolds over time and into several institutional dimensions. Thus, organizational reputation functions both as a moral economy and a fragile resource, that is constantly being negotiated between actions and narratives.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Answering the research question

This study, grounded in agenda-setting, framing, reputation and legitimacy theories, aimed to uncover how different portrayals in media shape corporate reputation of NGOs over time. Taking on Oxfam as case study. Research was conducted through a longitudinal qualitative thematic analysis of news articles from 2014 to 2024. Being both inductive and explorative in nature. From this analysis, six key themes emerged: (1) accountability & governance failures, (2) crisis & organizational misconduct, (3) media representation & public discourse, (4) internal positioning, (5) reputation & legitimacy management and (6) donor dynamics & financial pressure.

It was found that negative media coverage significantly impacted donor and corporate sponsors' trust in Oxfam by providing them with information about the organization's trustworthiness and legitimacy. Especially after the 2018 scandal when media framing emphasized moral and institutional failures. Causing donor withdrawal and public backlash. Sponsors treated these portrayals as indicators of deep systemic organizational failures, transforming a symbolic crisis into material loss. This effect was shaped by ideological differences in media portrayals. Whereas left-leaning news outlets framed Oxfam as a flawed but as a still valuable actor. Focusing on reform efforts and systemic challenges. While right-leaning news outlets portrayed the scandal as evidence of hypocrisy and ideological deception. Reinforcing negative perceptions and intensifying reputational loss. Across the ten-year timeline, recurring narratives focused on crisis, moral failure, and legitimacy loss. Even while Oxfam attempted to reform, the media attention remained largely crisis oriented. Which made it difficult for Oxfam to rebuild their reputation and regain public trust. While positive narratives existed, they were less prominent and influential.

Altogether, these findings show how media portrayals shape Oxfam's corporate reputation. They highlight that the media does not just function as observers of institutional crises. They rather act as powerful agents that actively play a role in the construction, amplification and legitimization of reputational narratives. An event that played a major role in demonstrating how corporate reputation is influenced and build, was the 2018 Haiti sex scandal which shed a different light on Oxfam. Triggering a wave of moral evaluations and symbolic judgments by the public. Media outlets framed the event as a sign of broader governance and ethical failures. Which led to the public shifting their perception of Oxfam, significantly influencing donor behavior. This suggests that NGO reputation is a product of

ongoing narrative negotiations, shaped by both internal actions and external representations. Thus, media portrayals and reputational dynamics are interdependent. They are not just influencing each other but they are actively creating and shaping each other. Together they act as a force that both reflects and reshapes the legitimacy of NGOs.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

This study has several theoretical implications that add to preexisting frameworks that contribute to the understanding of organizational reputation, legitimacy, and media influence. First, the findings strongly align with the framing theory (Goffman, 1974) in explaining how reputational crises are socially constructed. Oxfam's case illustrates that media framing is not just about representation (Entman, 1993, p. 52). It is also a politically motivated, designed to assign blame, shape public perception and establish certain interpretations of organizational failure. This is visible in the ideological divide between left and right leaning news outlets (Farady et al., 2025, p. 111). Which show that frames are used strategically and have specific functions in influencing the narrative. They either defend institutional ideals or amplify institutional critique. This highlights the need to understand framing not just as a media practice, but as a political act. Most interesting is that this study shows that framing is not limited to influencing intangible factors like perception. In fact, it can have tangible material consequences. In Oxfam's case, framing played a role in donor withdrawal that led to financial instability. This extends framing theory because it demonstrates that it has a role in influencing materialistic outcomes. This goes beyond the idea that framing theory only affects the public discourse around a topic

Secondly, this research supports but also complicates Suchman's (1995) theory on organizational legitimacy. While the theory's distinction between pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy remains relevant. The findings of this study underscore that legitimacy can in fact, be externally revoked. Regardless of an organization's internal efforts to reform. Oxfam's case reveals that once public narratives become centred around themes of moral failure. Efforts that are aimed at structural or symbolic recovery often fail to regain control over the dominant narrative. This introduces a theoretical tension within this conceptual framework. Because it challenges the idea that an organization is seen to be legitimate, if it behaves according to social expectations (Hudson, 2001, p. 348). These findings show that aligning with social expectations alone is not enough to maintain legitimate. Therefore,

legitimacy has become more than just doing the right thing, it has now also become about narrative power. Because even if an organization like Oxfam tries to internally reform and improve, its legitimacy may still not be restored if the public narrative remains negative. Nowadays, an organization needs to have the capacity to reframe itself to reclaim credibility within a highly mediated environment. Thus, this idea challenges the more traditional view of legitimacy as something internally governed and earned solely through good behavior.

Furthermore, this research contributes to reputation management theory, particularly to the Reputation Quotient model (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). The findings confirm that NGOs attempt to manage several reputational dimensions from the Reputation Quotient Model. However, they also reveal that these attempts are frequently interpreted through already pre-existing media narratives. Which can undermine their effectiveness. This complicates reputation management theory because it argues that reputational repair is not just a strategic communication process. It requires reframing within ideologically mediated public discourse to successfully manage their reputation.

Finally, this research uses the structural functionalism perspective (Durkheim, 1893) to highlight the role of NGOs as morally elite actors within society. Oxfam's scandal in 2018 disrupted this expectation, triggering not only institutional critique but a broader crisis in confidence within the humanitarian sector. Suggesting that the reputational collapse of one major NGO player can have systemic consequences. This implies that NGOs are not isolated actors but are embedded within a broader reputational ecosystem. In which one organization's failure threatens the integrity of the whole sector. This case represents a form of institutional dysfunction. When NGOs do not act as morally elite actors, it that weakens public trust in civil society's moral authority (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 343). This introduces the critical theoretical implication that reputation is not only an organizational asset but a societal function. NGOs help maintain social trust and moral compliance but when they fail, they create systemic ruptures. These ruptures are amplified by the media. Since the media, as institutions themselves also have the obligation to fulfil their role to society, which is correctly informing the public. However, through repeated coverage, emotionally charged language, and selective media narratives, they play a central role in causing dysfunction within society. By not only exposing the scandal but by morally amplifying and ideologically reframing it in ways that sustained public outrage and skepticism. Undermining the moral standard that NGOs are expected to maintain. This case highlights the media's power not only to report dysfunction but to co-create and institutionalize it within public discourse (Anderson and Meyer, 1975, p. 12) the. Therefore, the structural functionalism perspective must evolve in

order to account for inter-organizational dynamics and the symbolic expectations placed upon NGOs as protectors of ethical practice.

Altogether, these theoretical implications argue for a more integrated understanding of NGO reputation. One that sees reputation not as a static attribute, but as a discursively produced, politically contested and socially constructed phenomenon. That is constantly being shaped by the interplay of media, stakeholders, and organizational response.

5.2.2 Practical implications

Beyond the theoretical contributions, this research also highlights important implications for NGOs, media institutions and donors. For NGOs, the findings emphasize that reputation management must be embedded into an organization's internal governance process. Their reputation must reflect in their organizational culture, norms and values, and transparency. Reputation management is not just a reaction to crisis, but an ongoing process. Involving strategic communication, ethical leadership and stakeholder engagement. This research highlighted the fragility of moral credibility. Therefore, NGOs must learn how to carefully manage how they are represented. Because once moral credibility is damaged, it is incredibly hard to regain. Thus, reputation management must extend beyond just crisis response because it also requires ongoing narrative monitoring.

For the media, the findings underscore its power and responsibility of narrative framing. Raising ethical questions about narrative responsibility and ideological framing. While it is essential that journalists remain critical. The repetition and emotional intensification of scandal coverage can produce long lasting reputational consequences. Which can sometimes have unproportionate consequences for NGOs. Especially because their ability to operate effectively relies mostly on public trust. Therefore, a more neutral media approach around NGO discourse would benefit NGO legitimacy. Making NGOs less vulnerable to the long-lasting consequences of media framing. The new approach should contextualize rather than sensationalize scandals. In order to foster a fairer discourse around NGO accountability.

Lastly for donors, this study reveals the risks of the symbolic distancing of donors and supporters, in response to reputational crises such as a scandal. While risk management is understandable, it can undermine long-term humanitarian objectives. Because withdrawing funding from NGOs like Oxfam, might unintentionally lead to instability in the NGO sector. Impacting their work in the humanitarian field, particularly the vulnerable communities that NGOs try to help. Therefore, a better suited donor reaction in times of crisis might involve

partnering in reform. Rather than punishing organizational failure from a distance. To avoid long-lasting negative impacts on the humanitarian sector.

Altogether, this study shows how easy it is for NGOs to lose their legitimacy after a scandal. The mediation of the scandal compromises their ability to act effectively in the humanitarian field. Highlighting the importance of the role that the media plays in constructing organizational legitimacy. Because the media have to weigh out the risk of NGOs losing their moral legitimacy and sensationalized media reporting.

5.3 Limitations

While this research offers detailed insights into different media portrayals of NGOs, this study is still subject to several limitations. First and foremost, this study presents a case study since it focuses on one single NGO. While Oxfam is one of the biggest NGOs, it limits the generalizability of findings across the nonprofit sector. Organizational and reputational dynamics might be different in smaller NGOs because they receive less media coverage.

Secondly, the analysis is solely based on news articles. While they provide important insights into public discourse and NGO framing. They lack the ability to give insights into internal organizational dynamics and decision-making processes. Therefore, this study is unable to fully capture how Oxfam has internally negotiated its reputational strategy and how donors made their funding decisions. Another limitation of the data selection is that it only includes a limited selection of English-language news articles from predominantly Western countries. This might not be able to capture the global diversity of media perspectives from other parts of the world. Therefore, the findings may reflect the Western framing of NGO legitimacy and accountability. Limiting the transferability of the results to other cultural and media contexts.

Additionally, this study focused on how the media presented certain topics. It did not explore how the public interpreted these portrayals. Therefore, this study cannot draw any conclusions about how the public internalized and responded to those media portrayals. Only on how those portrayals were constructed and distributed. Therefore, this study could have benefited from interviews or surveys that captured how the public perceived Oxfam's organizational legitimacy.

Lastly, the inherently interpretive nature of a reflexive thematic analysis causes a limitation in objectivity. The themes that emerged are actively constructed by the researcher's own theoretical lens and positionality. Leading to specific choices during the coding process. While reflexivity was practiced throughout the whole research, for example by making

memos, reflecting critical on assumptions and being aware of the researcher's positionality. It cannot be ruled out that the researcher's interpretation is totally objective and uninfluenced. A different researcher may have identified alternative themes or emphasized other dynamics.

5.2 Future research

Building on these findings, several directions for future research are possible. First and foremost, it should include multiple NGOs, small and big, for the results to become more generalizable. Future research should also include audience reception. Focused on investigating how people across different demographics, ideologies and donor groups interpret NGO scandals and react to media narratives. Besides, the range of scandals should be extended. While the scandal of Oxfam was related to sex, it must be investigated if the nature of an organizational scandal impacts reputational dynamics. Relating this to how different audiences perceive these scandals and what the consequences are for organizational legitimacy.

Seeing the effect that donor withdrawal has on organizational legitimacy, it should be explored how donor institutions themselves act as narrative agents. They are contributing to the reputational construction of organizations through their public statements, funding decisions and partnerships. They are not just passive but active actors in shaping legitimacy. Therefore, by understanding the interplay between donor's actions and media coverage, it could uncover how legitimacy is co-produced.

Finally, research could examine the long-term effects of reputational repair strategies. Questioning which type of responses are actually successful in rebuilding legitimacy. And what the conditions are in which these strategies work. These questions are important to strengthen the resilience and trustworthiness of humanitarian institutions in an era of growing scrutiny. Uncovering the successful strategies and conditions on reputational repair could lead to more effective reputational risk governance across the sector.

References

- Allan, J. I., & Hadden, J. (2017). Exploring the framing power of NGOs in global climate politics. *Environmental Politics*, 26(4), 600–620.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2017.1319017>
- Allweiss, A., Grant, C. A., & Manning, K. (2014). Behind the photos and the tears: media images, neoliberal discourses, racialized constructions of space and school closings in Chicago. *Race Ethnicity And Education*, 18(5), 611–631.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.969223>
- Anderson, J. A., & Meyer, T. P. (1975). Functionalism and the mass media. *Journal Of Broadcasting*, 19(1), 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838157509363766>
- Archambeault, D. S., & Webber, S. (2018). Fraud survival in nonprofit organizations: Empirical evidence. *Nonprofit Management And Leadership*, 29(1), 29–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21313>
- Banks, N., Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (2014). NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still Too Close for Comfort? *World Development*, 66, 707–718.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.09.028>
- BBC News. (2018, 21 februari). *Oxfam Haiti allegations: How the scandal unfolded*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43112200>
- Suddaby, R., Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2017). Legitimacy. *Academy Of Management Annals*, 11(1), 451–478. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2015.0101>
- Belal, A., Thomson, I., & Cordery, C. (2023). Critical perspectives on NGO governance and accountability. *Critical Perspectives On Accounting*, 92, 102583.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2023.102583>
- Benkler, Y., Farris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda: Manipulation*,

- Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*. Oxford University Press.
<https://library.oopen.org/bitstream/20.500.12657/28351/1/9780190923624.pdf>
- Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2014). The “Macro” and the “Micro” of Legitimacy: Toward a Multilevel Theory of the Legitimacy Process. *Academy Of Management Review*, 40(1), 49–75. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2013.0318>
- Brown, T. J., & Dacin, P. A. (1997). The Company and the Product: Corporate Associations and Consumer Product Responses. *Journal Of Marketing*, 61(1), 68–84. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299706100106>
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., Bywaters, D., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal Of Research in Nursing*, 25(8), 652–661. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1744987120927206>
- Carroll, C. E. (2009). Defining reputation: Perspectives across disciplines. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2009.26>
- Chen, C., & Otubanjo, O. (2013). A functional perspective to the meaning of corporate reputation. *The Marketing Review*, 13(4), 329–345. <https://doi.org/10.1362/146934713x13832199716741>
- Clarke, G. (2021). The Credibility of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and the Oxfam Scandal of 2018. *Journal Of Civil Society*, 17(3–4), 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2021.1994200>
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2016). Thematic analysis. *The Journal Of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), 297–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>
- Cooley, A., & Ron, J. (2002). The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the

- Political Economy of Transnational Action. *International Security*, 27(1), 5–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/016228802320231217>
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting Organization Reputations During a Crisis: The Development and Application of Situational Crisis Communication Theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550049>
- Coombs, W. T., & Holladay, S. J. (2014). How publics react to crisis communication efforts. *Journal Of Communication Management*, 18(1), 40–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/jcom-03-2013-0015>
- Davis, J., Henson, S., & Swiss, L. (2020). In INGOs we trust? How individual determinants and the framing of INGOs influences public trust. *Development in Practice*, 30(6), 809–824. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2020.1801593>
- De Bruin Cardoso, I., Meyer, M., & Kaptein, M. (2025). Exploring the Dark Side of the NGO Halo: Relating NGO Mission, Morals, and People to NGO Unethical Behavior. *Wiley*, 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/nvsm.70000>
- Deephouse, D. L., & Suchman, M. (2008). Legitimacy in organizational institutionalism. In *SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks* (pp. 49–77).
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849200387.n2>
- Deloffre, M. Z., & Schmitz, H. P. (2019). International NGO legitimacy. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 606–620). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315268927-42>
- Dhanani, A., & Kennedy, D. (2022). Envisioning legitimacy: visual dimensions of NGO annual reports. *Accounting Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 36(1), 348–377.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/aaaj-01-2020-4377>
- Divecha, C., Tullu, & Karande, S. (2023). Utilizing tables, figures, charts and graphs to enhance the readability of a research paper. *Journal Of Postgraduate Medicine*, 69(3), 125–131. https://doi.org/10.4103/jpgm.jpgm_387_23

- Durkheim, E. (1893). *The Division of Labour in Society*. New York: The Free Press.
- Edwards, M. (2009). Civil society. *VOLUNTAS International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*, 26(1), 414–416.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-014-9539-x>
- Einwiller, S. A., Carroll, C. E., & Korn, K. (2010). Under What Conditions Do the News Media Influence Corporate Reputation? The Roles of Media Dependency and Need for Orientation. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 12(4), 299–315.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/crr.2009.28>
- Elejalde, E., Ferres, L., & Herder, E. (2018). On the nature of real and perceived bias in the mainstream media. *PLoS ONE*, 13(3), e0193765.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0193765>
- Elliott, J. (2015). How the Red Cross Raised Half a Billion Dollars for Haiti and Built Six Homes. *ProPublica*. <https://www.propublica.org/article/how-the-red-cross-raised-half-a-billion-dollars-for-haiti-and-built-6-homes>
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal Of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Farady, R. M., Panggabean, H., Sunaringsih, M. S., Qorib, F., & Bangun, N. (2025). The Ideological Upheaval of Stakeholders in Online News about AI as CEO. *Nyimak Journal Of Communication*, 9(1), 98. <https://doi.org/10.31000/nyimak.v9i1.12806>
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing Value from the Corporate Image*. New York: Harvard Business School Press.
- Fombrun, C. J., & Van Riel, C. B. M. (2004). *Fame & fortune : how successful companies build winning reputations*. FT Prentice Hall.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on

- Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal Of Sociology*, 95(1), 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1086/229213>
- García, M. M. (2010). Perception is truth: How U.S. newspapers framed the “Go Green” conflict between BP and Greenpeace. *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), 57–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2010.10.001>
- Gayle, D. (2018). Timeline: Oxfam sexual exploitation scandal in Haiti. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/timeline-oxfam-sexual-exploitation-scandal-in-haiti>
- Gibelman, M., & Gelman, S. R. (2001). Very Public Scandals: Nongovernmental Organizations in Trouble. *VOLUNTAS International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*, 12(1), 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1011242911726>
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Harvard University Press.
- Gonçalves, G., & Oliveira, E. (2022). Introducing Nonprofit Communication and Mapping the Research Field. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 1–11). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003170563-1>
- Haack, P. (2012). *Legitimacy in institutional theory: Three essays on social judgments in a globalized world*. <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-72272>
- Harrison, V., Vafeiadis, M., Diddi, P., & Conlin, J. (2021). The impact of CSR on nonprofit outcomes: how the choice of corporate partner influences reputation and supportive intentions. *Corporate Communications An International Journal*, 27(2), 205–225. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ccij-02-2021-0020>
- Herzog, C., Handke, C., & Hitters, E. (2019). Analyzing talk and text II: Thematic

- analysis. In H. Van den Bulck, M. Puppins, K. Donders & L. Van Audenhove (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research* (pp. 385–401). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16065-4_22
- Hollstein, B. (2014). Qualitative approaches. In *SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks* (pp. 404–416). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446294413.n27>
- Hou, J., Zhang, C., & King, R. A. (2016). Understanding the Dynamics of the Individual Donor’s Trust Damage in the Philanthropic Sector. *VOLUNTAS International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(2), 648–671. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9681-8>
- Hudock, A. C. (1999). *NGOs and civil society : democracy by proxy?*. Polity. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA44132920>
- Hudson, A. (2001). NGOs’ transnational advocacy networks: from ‘legitimacy’ to ‘political responsibility’? *Global Networks*, 1(4), 331–352. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0374.00019>
- Janssen, S., & Verboord, M. (2024). *Methodological guidelines thesis research* (10th ed.). Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Jayasinghe, S. (2011). Erosion of trust in humanitarian agencies: what strategies might help? *Global Health Action*, 4(1), 8973. <https://doi.org/10.3402/gha.v4i0.8973>
- Kepplinger, H. M., Geiss, S., & Siebert, S. (2012). Framing Scandals: Cognitive and Emotional Media Effects. *Journal Of Communication*, 62(4), 659–681. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01653.x>
- Kim, M. (2025). How Does Financial Transparency Influence Citizens’ Trust in

- Nonprofit Organizations? The Moderating Role of Financial Information on Fiscal Stress. *VOLUNTAS International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-025-00734-2>
- Kiouis, S., Popescu, C., & Mitrook, M. (2007). Understanding Influence on Corporate Reputation: An Examination of Public Relations Efforts, Media Coverage, Public Opinion, and Financial Performance From an Agenda-Building and Agenda-Setting Perspective. *Journal Of Public Relations Research*, 19(2), 147–165.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10627260701290661>
- Koivula, A., Marttila, E., & Koiranen, I. (2024). Media framing and trust: A randomized survey experiment on attitudes towards the unvaccinated during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 10, 101157.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101157>
- Lammers, J. C., & Guth, K. (2013). *The Institutionalization of Corporate Reputation* (pp. 222–234). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118335529.ch20>
- Leardini, C., Moggi, S., & Rossi, G. (2018). The New Era of Stakeholder Engagement: Gaining, Maintaining, and Repairing Legitimacy in Nonprofit Organizations. *International Journal Of Public Administration*, 42(6), 520–532.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1491593>
- Lee, T., Johnson, E., & Prakash, A. (2010). Media Independence and Trust in NGOs. *Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(1), 8–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764010384444>
- Lewis, D. (2009). Non-governmental organizations, definition and history. In H. Anheier & S. Toepler (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of civil society* (pp. 1056–1062). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-93996-4_3
- Lyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). News that matters : television and American

- opinion. In *University of Chicago Press eBooks*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA21988387>
- Marberg, A., Van Kranenburg, H., & Korzilius, H. (2016). NGOs in the News: The Road to Taken-for-Grantedness. *VOLUNTAS International Journal Of Voluntary And Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(6), 2734–2763. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9757-5>
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>
- Meriläinen, N., & Vos, M. (2013). Framing issues in the public debate: the case of human rights. *Corporate Communications An International Journal*, 18(1), 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563281311294164>
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal Of Sociology*, 83(2), 340–363. <https://doi.org/10.1086/226550>
- Mohammed, H. S. (2024). Shaping Perceptions: Media Framing and Tone in reporting Kerala’s Landslides. *Disaster Advances*, 18(2), 18–23. <https://doi.org/10.25303/182da018023>
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis. *International Journal Of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847>
- Oxfam. (n.d.). <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/about-us/#:~:text=Oxfam's%20mission%20and%20vision,can%20thrive%2C%20not%20just%20survive.>
- Oxfam (2021). Safeguarding improvement plan: Six month update to March 2021. *Oxfam International*. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/safeguarding-improvement-plan-six-month-update-march-2021>

- Pacis, K. J., Almendrala, M. A., Paitone, R. J., & Etrata, A., Jr. (2022). The relevance of the notion for all publicity is good publicity: The influencing factors in the 21st century. *International Journal Of Research in Business And Social Science (2147-4478)*, 11(2), 42–56. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i2.1687>
- Perrow, C. (1981). Normal accident at three Mile Island. *Society*, 18(5), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02701322>
- Powers, M. (2016). NGO Publicity and Reinforcing Path Dependencies. *The International Journal Of Press/Politics*, 21(4), 490–507. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216658373>
- Riffe, D., Lacy, S., Watson, B. R., & Lovejoy, J. (2023). *Analyzing media messages*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003288428>
- Sargeant, A., & Lee, S. (2004). Donor Trust and Relationship Commitment in the U.K. Charity Sector: The Impact on Behavior. *Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33(2), 185–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764004263321>
- Schultz, F., Kleinnijenhuis, J., Oegema, D., Utz, S., & Van Atteveldt, W. (2011). Strategic framing in the BP crisis: A semantic network analysis of associative frames. *Public Relations Review*, 38(1), 97–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.08.003>
- Silverman, D. (2011). Interpreting qualitative data : a guide to the principles of qualitative research. In *Sage eBooks*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB07470273>
- Sloan, M. F. (2008). The Effects of Nonprofit Accountability Ratings on Donor Behavior. *Nonprofit And Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(2), 220–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764008316470>
- Soken-Huberty, E. (2023). *The 15 Biggest NGOs in the World*. Human Rights Careers. <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/biggest-ngos-in-the-world/>
- Spitzeck, H. (2009). Organizational Moral Learning: What, If Anything, Do

- Corporations Learn from NGO Critique? *Journal Of Business Ethics*, 88(1), 157–173.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0112-2>
- Svedin, L. (2012). *Accountability in Crises and Public Trust in Governing Institutions*. Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203120149>
- Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *Academy Of Management Review*, 20(3), 571–610.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080331>
- Suddaby, R., Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2017). Legitimacy. *Academy Of Management Annals*, 11(1), 451–478. <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2015.0101>
- Thomas, D. R. (2006). *A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data*. *American Journal Of Evaluation*, 27(2), 237–246.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748>
- Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing. *Information Design Journal*, 13(1), 51–62.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/idjdd.13.1.06vre>
- Watson, T. J. (2007). Managing Identity: Identity Work, Personal Predicaments and Structural Circumstances. *Organization*, 15(1), 121–143.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508407084488>
- Willets, P. (2002). What is a non-governmental organization? *UNESCO Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems*. <https://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willets/CS-NTWKS/NGO-ART.HTM>
- Wonneberger, A., & Jacobs, S. (2017). Media positioning: comparing organizations' standing in the news. *Corporate Communications An International Journal*, 22(3), 354–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ccij-11-2016-0075>
- Zhang, Y. (2024). The Impact of New Media on Traditional Media. *Journal Of*

Education Humanities And Social Sciences, 28, 691–696.

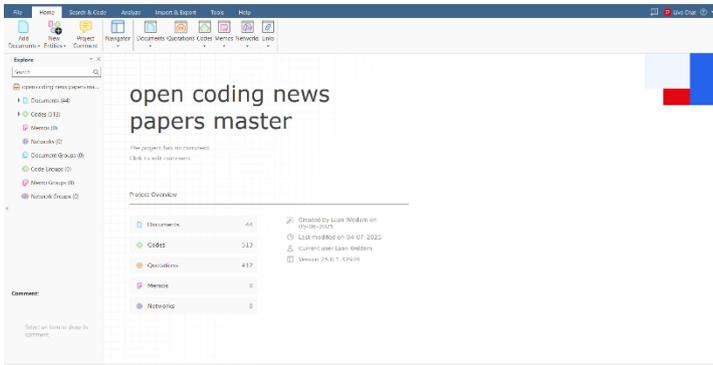
<https://doi.org/10.54097/cfy60b30>

Zhang, Y., Xie, Y. J., Yang, L., Cheung, K., Zhang, Q., Li, Y., Hao, C., Wang, H. H.,
Zhou, Q., & Leung, A. Y. M. (2024). Community-based participatory research (CBPR)
approaches in vaccination promotion: a scoping review. *International Journal For
Equity in Health*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-024-02278-1>

Appendix

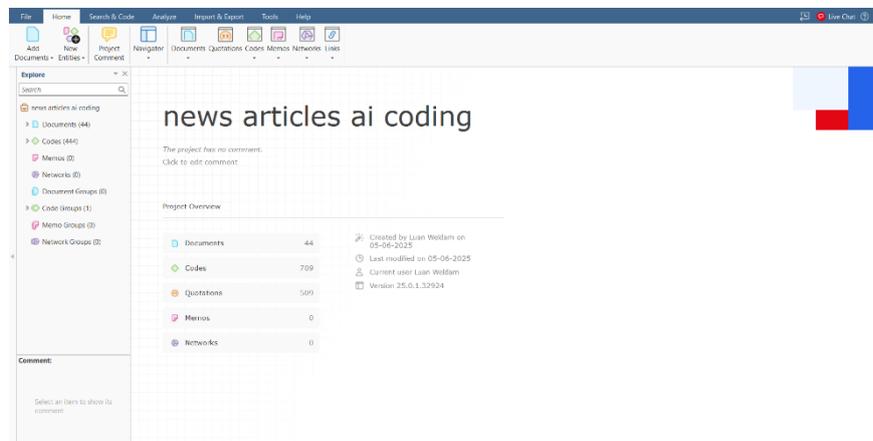
Appendix A:

Open coding process in AtlasTi.



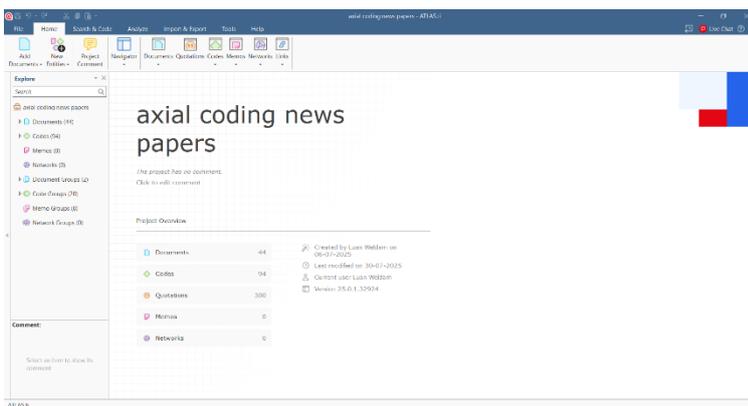
Appendix B:

AI coding process in AtlasTi.



Appendix C:

Axial & selective coding process in AtlasTi.



Appendix D:

Codebook.

Theme	Sub-theme	Open codes	Quote examples
Crisis & organizational misconduct	Misconduct	Sexual misconduct Workplace misconduct Power exploitation Data manipulation allegation Multiple misconduct claims	<p><i>“Claims of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, bullying, fraud, and breaches of safeguarding procedures detailed in a February letter to Oxfam chiefs had built up over years with an organisational culture that made it difficult – and dangerous – for employees to report misconduct, five whistleblowers who worked for Oxfam and who signed the letter have told The New Humanitarian”.</i> (Dodds, P., 2021, para.1)</p> <p><i>“Its interim report on Oxfam’s workplace culture was published in January and grabbed headlines with its findings that bullying, harassment and discrimination were rife in many of the charity’s offices. Members of Oxfam staff aired concerns about elitism, racism, “colonial behaviour”, sexism and other conduct that “can create an atmosphere that allows harassment, sexual abuse, and other forms of abuse to take place”</i> (O’Neill, S., 2019, para. 8)</p>
	Crisis response	Crisis management Crisis mismanagement Crisis accountability Crisis communication Crisis justification Response to misconduct Response to emotional distress Cover-up allegation Public apology Institutional response	<p><i>“The organization said on Friday that its 2011 investigation had “resulted in the creation of our dedicated Safeguarding Team and a confidential ‘whistle-blowing’ hotline as part of a package of measures to ensure that we do all we can to protect our staff, prevent sexual abuse and misconduct happening in the first place and improve how we handle any allegations.”</i> (Pérez-Peña, R., 2018, para.10)</p> <p><i>“Nobert said that, in several examples, alleged attackers had been transferred to different countries, rather than facing discipline procedures from their employers. She also said that abuse of local people was a serious problem.”</i> (Watt, H., 2017, para.11)</p>
	Organizational scandal	Organizational scandal	<p><i>“They were throwing big parties with prostitutes. These girls were wearing Oxfam T-shirts, running around half-naked, it was a like a full-on Caligula orgy. It was unbelievable. It was crazy. At one party there were at least five girls and two of them had Oxfam white T-shirts on. These men used to talk about holding ‘young meat barbecues’.”</i> (O’Neill, S., 2018,</p>

		Impact of scandals	para.8)
		Failure to act	<i>“Oxfam is accused of further failures in Haiti by keeping a senior aid worker there for more than a year despite reported sexual harassment claims. According to an internal report seen by the Times, the charity attempted to “contain” allegations against Raphael Mutiku, an engineer who led Oxfam’s installation of water supplies after the earthquake. Oxfam confirms the decision not to dismiss Mutiku was made by Van Hauwermeiren.” (Gayle, D., 2018, para. 11)</i>
Accountability & governance failures	Leadership and structural weakness	Leadership accountability Leadership accountability failure Governance failure Structural failure	<i>“Oxfam was said to lack the robust policies and procedures to tackle the issues and whistleblowing arrangements were “deficient to the point that staff morale is compromised at times”.” (O’Neill, S., 2019, para. 10)</i> <i>“On another difficult day for Oxfam, which culminated in Penny Mordaunt, the international development secretary, saying the former executives Dame Barbara Stocking and Penny Lawrence may have deliberately misled the Charity Commission, a Guardian/ICM poll of more than 2,000 people revealed the effect the scandal has had on the public perception of aid charities.” (Elgot, J., & McVeigh, K., 2019, para. 6)</i>
	Institutional and ethical responsibility	Organizational accountability Legal accountability Moral accountability Ethical compliance pressure Institutional misconduct Ethical critique Institutional reflection Holding others accountable	<i>“Oxfam is not unique. Sexual abuse is a serious problem in society. We all, including Oxfam, need to get better at preventing and dealing with sexual abuse but as an international organisation fighting for women’s rights we have a special responsibility to practise what we preach and protect our staff, volunteers and beneficiaries from sexual harassment and abuse.” (Watt, H., 2017, para. 9)</i> <i>“The chief executive of Oxfam GB, Danny Sriskandarajah, in a phone call apologized to Israel’s ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mark Regev, after Regev tweeted “Why is Oxfam selling anti-Semitic literature?”” (Times of Israel., 2020, para. 8)</i>
	Media and public narrative	Media influence Media critique Critique of Oxfam	<i>“But some prominent journalists—Felix Salmon, of Fusion, and Ezra Klein, of Vox—have challenged the report’s findings. “This version of Oxfam’s report is just as crap as the last version,” Salmon writes. Salmon and Klein make similar criticisms, related to how the report takes debt into account.” (Vara, V., 2015, para. 2)</i> <i>“In a statement Tuesday, Cayman Finance</i>

Media representation & public discourse		<p>Critique of institutions</p> <p>Narrative backlash</p> <p>Contrarian framing</p>	<p>CEO Jude Scott claimed that the Oxfam report published this week, outlining the issues that major tax avoidance by the mega wealth and huge conglomerates cause, was “alarmism” that was “unsupported by the facts”. Cayman News., 2016, para. 2)</p>
	Public reaction	<p>Public backlash</p> <p>Moral outrage</p> <p>Public opinion</p> <p>Public awareness challenge</p> <p>Public reassurance</p> <p>Public acknowledgment</p>	<p>“Scott stated that Cayman attracts investment capital and financing which is pooled and invested back into opportunities across the globe – often benefitting the citizens of the developing countries that Oxfam purports to speak for. “Oxfam would benefit from spending its time and resources to properly understand the tremendous value the Cayman Islands provides globally,” he added.” (Cayman News., 2016, para. 12)</p> <p>“Oxfam has faced criticism following a renewed focus on sexual exploitation in the aftermath of the scandal surrounding the Hollywood movie mogul Harvey Weinstein.” (Watt, H., 2017, para. 3)</p>
	Framing and political influence	<p>Political framing</p> <p>Political bias</p> <p>NGO neutrality critique</p>	<p>“Oxfam is on a list of thousands of NGOs, according to local media reports, whose licence has not been renewed. Without the licence, these organisations can only use donations and contributions from within India.” (Dhillon, A., 2022, para. 3)</p> <p>“She also said Oxfam had “funded a BDS [boycott, divest, sanctions] movement in the past.” The Observer writer added that Oxfam denies supporting BDS against Israel.” (Al Arabiya., 2014, para. 4)</p>
Donor dynamics & financial pressure	Donor criticism and loss	<p>Donor criticism</p> <p>Donor backlash</p> <p>Donor and sponsor response</p> <p>Loss of donors</p>	<p>“Goldring tells MPs on the international development select committee that the charity has lost 7,000 regular donors since the scandal emerged.” (Gayle, 2018, para. 9)</p> <p>“He also admitted thousands of people had cancelled their donations since the scandal broke and said corporate donors were waiting to watch what the charity’s response would be.” (Elgot, J., & McVeigh, K., 2019, para. 5)</p>
	Financial risk	<p>Donor compliance pressure</p> <p>Donor pressure</p> <p>Funding challenges</p> <p>Funding risk</p>	<p>“Oxfam India has said its work in the country will be imperilled by the government’s refusal to renew a licence that permits it to receive funds from abroad.” (Dhillon, A., 2022, para. 1)</p> <p>“Oxfam is reportedly set to cut dozens of jobs as the charity faces a £16m budget shortfall in the wake of the Haiti sex scandal.” (The Week., 2020, para. 1)</p>

Reputation & legitimacy management	Reputation crisis	<p>Reputational damage</p> <p>Reputational fallout</p> <p>Reputation risk</p> <p>Trust erosion</p>	<p><i>"The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, first begun almost 77 years ago and later shortened to the nifty moniker Oxfam, is now far more than just a famine relief charity. Oxfam is a brand. And now a damaged one."</i> (Watt, H., 2017, para. 9)</p> <p><i>"The actor Minnie Driver, who was one of 16 celebrity patrons for Oxfam, says she is withdrawing her support "in no uncertain terms" after working with the charity for more than 20 years. At the same time, claims emerge that Van Hauwermeiren had been forced out of another British charity seven years earlier after an investigation into the use of sex workers."</i> (Gayle, 2018, para. 8)</p>
	Reputation strategy	<p>Reputation management</p> <p>Defense of reputation</p> <p>Organizational credibility challenge</p> <p>Brand deterioration</p>	<p><i>"These organizations are well respected and funded by many major international donors. UAWC is legally registered in Israel, and neither are proscribed organizations in any country. Oxfam's support for UAWC helps small-scale dairy farmers and herders to make a better living, while our work with UHWC helps improve emergency health services for people in Gaza. We do not work with organizations that use or promote violence."</i> (Spencer, H., 2014, para. 16)</p> <p><i>"Baroness Stowell, the Charity Commission's chairman, was scathing. "No charity is so large, nor is its mission so important that it can afford to put its own reputation ahead of the dignity and wellbeing of those it exists to protect," she said."</i> (Mendick, R., 2019, para. 13)</p>
Internal positioning	Reflection and rebuilding	<p>Reflection on past actions</p> <p>Call for reform</p> <p>Call for accountability</p> <p>Communication strategy</p> <p>Organizational response</p> <p>Organizational initiative</p>	<p><i>"We continue to learn and seek to improve not just in how we handle complaints but also in changing the culture in which we work to prevent the abuse of power in the first place and support those that speak out," said a spokesman for Oxfam.</i> (Watt, H., 2017, para.8)</p> <p><i>"Oxfam has begun a major restructuring of its international services, including a significant number of redundancies, the charity's finance director has said."</i> (Civil Society., 2017, para. 1)</p>
	Organizational direction	<p>Organizational identity</p> <p>Organizational expansion</p> <p>Long-term partnership</p> <p>Innovation for sustainability</p>	<p><i>"Oxfam is one of Britain's best-known charities, employing thousands of staff working across 85 countries, and describes itself as a "global movement of people working towards a world without poverty". Yet, if its annual inequality report is anything to go by, the charity is consumed by such staggering prejudices about wealth, based on the politics of envy, that questions must be asked about how it can realistically hope to achieve its aims."</i> (Iqbal, J., 2022, para. 1)</p> <p><i>"Oxfam International, which commissioned the</i></p>

		Resource prioritization	cartoon as part of its gender justice campaign strand, subsequently published a re-edited version. It apologised for the “offence it caused” and said it had “made a mistake”. (Butler, P., 2023, para. 3)
		Response capacity risk	

Appendix E:

Theme distribution table AtlasTi.

	1: 2014L Gaa... 12	2: 2014L Gua... 25	3: 2014R Al... 5	4: 2014R The... 7	5: 2015L Voa... 7	6: 2015L Ne... 8	7: 2015R Reli... 7	8: 2015R Fox... 7	9: 2016L Gaa... 10	10: 2016L Vo... 7	11: 2016R Ba... 6	12: 2016R ... 6
◆ Crisis r...	10	9		2	2		1		1			
◆ Duncr...	4	2										
◆ Hiranci...	4	1		1								
◆ Framin...	3		2		1			2		1		
◆ Leader...	4	3	1		1	3	2		2	1	1	
◆ Media...	6	5	1			3		2			1	
◆ Organi...	8	3	4	2	2		2	4	6	3	3	
◆ organiz...	6	4										
◆ Orqeni...	3			1								
◆ Public r...	6	4	3	1	1	1		1	1	2	1	
◆ Ref/lect...	6	2	11	1	1		4		2		1	
◆ Reputa...	4											
◆ Reputa...	4			1							1	
◆ Types o...	4	4	1			2			2	1	1	
Totals		21	35	7	8	8	9	9	9	14	8	9

Appendix F:

Theme occurrence table.

Theme	In how many articles this theme occurred	Sub-theme	In how many articles this sub-theme occurred
Crisis & organizational misconduct	41	Misconduct	34
		Crisis response	33
		Organizational scandal	15
Accountability & governance failures	43	Leadership and structural weakness	29
		Institutional and ethical responsibility	42
Media representation & public discourse	35	Media and public narrative	6
		Public reaction	33
		Framing and political influence	12
Donor dynamics & financial pressure	15	Donor criticism and loss	8
		Financial risk	13
Reputation & legitimacy management	22	Reputation crisis	13
		Reputation strategy	13
Internal positioning	28	Reflection and rebuilding	24
		Organizational direction	7

Appendix G:

Chronological theme occurrence and news article overview table.

News Article	Year	Political view	Crisis & organizational misconduct	Accountability & governance failures	Media representation & public discourse	Donor dynamics & financial pressure	Reputation & legitimacy management	Internal positioning
Guardian 1	2014	Left	x	x	x			x
Guardian 2	2014	Left	X	x	x	x		x
Al Arabia	2014	Right	x	x	x			
The Times of Israel	2014	Right	x	x		x	x	X
Voa News	2015	Left	x	x	x			X
New Yorker	2015	Left	x	x	x			
Relief News	2015	Right	x	x				x
Fox News	2015	Right		x	X			
Guardian	2016	Left	x	x	x			x
Voa News	2016	Left	x	x	x			
Bandt	2016	Right	x	x	x		x	X
CNS Business	2016	Right		x	x		x	
Guardian	2017	Left	x	x	x			X
UK Fundraising	2017	Left	x	x	x		x	x
The Fiji Times	2017	Right	x	x	x		x	x
Civil Society	2017	Right	x	x	x		x	X
Guardian	2018	Left	x	x	x	x	X	
NY Times	2018	Left	x	x			x	x
Morocco World News	2018	Right	X	x	x	x	x	
The Times	2018	Right	x	x	x		x	x
Guardian	2019	Left	x	x	x	x	X	
Guardian 1	2019	Left	X	x		x		X
Telegraph	2019	Right	x	x	x		x	X
The Times	2019	Right	x	x	x		x	x
Guardian	2020	Left	x	x	x	x		X
The Week	2020	Left	x	x	x	x	X	
Times of Israel	2020	Right	x	x	x			
The Times	2020	Right	x	x	x		x	X
The New Humanitarian	2021	Left	x	x	x		X	
Guardian	2021	Left	x	x				X
Seychelles News Agency	2021	Right	x	x		x	x	X
The Times	2021	Right	x	x	x	x		x
Al Jazeera	2022	Left	x	x	x			x
Guardian	2022	Left	x	x	x	x	x	x
The Times	2022	Right	x	x			X	
The Times	2022	Right	x	x	x			X
Guardian	2023	Left	x	x	x			x
Guardian	2023	Left	x	x		x	x	x
The Times	2023	Right	x	x	x		x	X
The Times	2023	Right	X		x	x	x	x
Sudan Tribune	2024	Left	x	x		x		x
Guardian	2024	Left		x	x			X
The Times	2024	Right	x	x	x		x	
AP News	2024	Right	x	x	x		x	

Appendix H:

Data overview

News paper	Title	Year	Country of origin	Reference
Guardian	Oxfam: 85 richest people as wealthy as poorest half of the world	2014	United Kingdom	Wearden, G. (2014). Oxfam: 85 richest people as wealthy as poorest half of the world. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jan/20/oxfam-85-richest-people-half-of-the-world
Guardian	Oxfam: World must do more to stop Ebola becoming ‘disaster of our time.	2014	United Kingdom	The Guardian., (2014). Oxfam: World must do more to stop Ebola becoming ‘disaster of our time. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/18/ebola-world-must-do-more-stop-disaster-generation-oxfam
Al Arabia	Scarlett Johansson slams ‘politicized’	2014	Saudi Arabia	Al Arabiya., (2014). Scarlett Johansson slams ‘politicized’ Oxfam. <i>Al Arabiya</i> . https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2014/03/17/Scarlett-Johansson-slams-politicized-Oxfam
The Times of Israel	Israeli law group accuses Oxfam of funding terrorists	2014	Israel	Spencer, H. (2014). Israeli law group accuses Oxfam of funding terrorists. <i>The Times of Israel</i> . https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-law-group-accuses-oxfam-of-funding-terrorists/
Voa News	Oxfam: Yemen Aid Hit by Saudi-led Airstrikes	2015	United States	Reuters. (2015). Oxfam: Yemen Aid Hit by Saudi-led Airstrikes. <i>Voice Of America</i> . https://www.voanews.com/a/oxfam-condemns-saudi-led-airstrikes-in-yemen/2726355.html
New Yorker	Critics of Oxfam’s Poverty Statistics Are Missing the Point	2015	United States	Vara, V. (2015). Critics of Oxfam’s Poverty Statistics Are Missing the Point. <i>The New Yorker</i> . https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/critics-oxfams-poverty-statistics-missing-point
Relief News	Oxfam in South Sudan	2015	United Kingdom	Relief Web. (2015). Oxfam in South Sudan. <i>Relief Web</i> . https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/oxfam-s-work-south-sudan OXFAM’s work in South Sudan
Fox News	Kristen Davis, Scarlett Johansson chose different paths when work, Oxfam clashed	2015	United States	Fox News. (2015). Kristen Davis, Scarlett Johansson chose different paths when work, Oxfam clashed. <i>Fox News</i> . https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/kristen-davis-scarlett-johansson-chose-different-paths-when-work-oxfam-clashed
Guardian	US corporations have \$1.4tn hidden in tax havens, claims Oxfam report	2016	United Kingdom	Davies, R. (2016). US corporations have \$1.4tn hidden in tax havens, claims Oxfam report. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/14/us-corporations-14-trillion-hidden-tax-havens-oxfam
Voa News	Oxfam: US Firms Stash \$1.4 Trillion in Offshore Accounts Just Jeans, Uniqlo & Top Shop Head List Of Oxfam Australia’s	2016	United States	Bredemeier, K. (2016). Oxfam: US firms stash \$1.4 trillion in offshore accounts. <i>Voice Of America</i> . https://www.voanews.com/a/oxfam-us-firms-stash-14-trillion-in-offshore-accounts/3285860.html

	“Naughty” Retailers			
Bandt	Cayman Finance says Oxfam is wrong	2016	Australia	Brandt. (2016). <i>Just Jeans, Uniqlo & Top Shop Head List Of Oxfam Australia’s “Naughty” Retailers.</i> <i>Brandt.</i> B&T. https://www.bandt.com.au/just-jeans-uniqlo-top-shop-head-list-oxfams-naughty-retailers/
CNS Business	Oxfam says it has sacked 22 staff in a year over sexual abuse allegations	2016	Cayman Islands	Cayman News. (2016). Cayman Finance says Oxfam is wrong. <i>CNS Business.</i> https://cnsbusiness.com/2016/12/cayman-finance-says-oxfam-is-wrong/
Guardian	Oxfam says it has sacked 22 staff in a year over sexual abuse allegations	2017	United Kingdom	Watt, H. (2017). Oxfam says it has sacked 22 staff in a year over sexual abuse allegations. <i>The Guardian.</i> https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/31/oxfam-says-it-has-sacked-22-staff-in-a-year-over-sexual-abuse-allegations
UK Fundraising	Oxfam’s new DRTV ad shows the lifesaving power of the bucket	2017	United Kingdom	Lake, H. (2023). Oxfam’s new DRTV ad shows the lifesaving power of the bucket. <i>UK Fundraising.</i> https://fundraising.co.uk/2017/06/22/oxfams-new-drtv-ad-extols-power-bucket/
The Fiji Times	Oxfam’s Pacific campaigns challenge social norms	2017	Fiji	Vucago, A. (2017). Oxfam’s Pacific campaigns challenge social norms. <i>The Fiji Times.</i> https://www.fijitimes.com.fj/oxfams-pacific-campaigns-challenge-social-norms/
Civil Society	Oxfam restructure is “biggest change in the charity’s history	2017	United Kingdom	Civil Society. (2017). Oxfam restructure is “biggest change in the charity’s history. <i>Civil Society.</i> https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/oxfam-begins-major-restructure-of-international-services.html
Guardian	Timeline: Oxfam sexual exploitation scandal in Haiti	2018	United Kingdom	Gayle, D. (2018). Timeline: Oxfam sexual exploitation scandal in Haiti. <i>The Guardian.</i> https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/timeline-oxfam-sexual-exploitation-scandal-in-haiti
NY Times	Oxfam, British Charity, Admits Sexual Misconduct by Workers in Haiti	2018	United States	Pérez-Peña, R. (2018). Oxfam, British Charity, Admits Sexual Misconduct by Workers in Haiti. <i>New York Times.</i> https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/09/world/americas/oxfam-haiti-sexual-misconduct.html
Morocco World News	Oxfam Charity Faced with Sex Scandal and Fund-Cutting Threats	2018	Morocco	Morocco World News. (2018). Oxfam Charity Faced with Sex Scandal and Fund-Cutting Threats. <i>Morocco World News.</i> https://www.morocroworldnews.com/2018/02/92244/oxfam-charity-faced-sex-scandal-fund-cutting-threats/
The Times	Oxfam in Haiti: ‘It was like a Caligula orgy with prostitutes in Oxfam T-shirts’	2018	United Kingdom	O’Neill, S. (2018). Oxfam in Haiti: ‘It was like a Caligula orgy with prostitutes in Oxfam T-shirts’. <i>The Times.</i> https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-in-haiti-it-was-like-a-caligula-orgy-with-prostitutes-in-oxfam-t-shirts-p32wlk0rp
Guardian	Oxfam loses 7,000 donors since sexual exploitation scandal	2019	United Kingdom	Elgot, J., & McVeigh, K. (2019). Oxfam loses 7,000 donors since sexual exploitation scandal. <i>The Guardian.</i> https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/20/oxfam-boss-mark-golding-apologises-over-abuse-of-

				haiti-quake-victims
Guardian	Oxfam failed to report child abuse claims in Haiti, inquiry finds	2019	United Kingdom	Ratcliffe, R. (2019). Oxfam failed to report child abuse claims in Haiti, inquiry finds. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/jun/11/oxfam-abuse-claims-haiti-charity-commission-report
Telegraph	The rise and fall of Oxfam, the billion pound charity mired in a sex scandal	2019	United Kingdom	Mendick, R. (2019). The rise and fall of Oxfam, the billion pound charity mired in a sex scandal. <i>The Telegraph</i> . https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/06/11/rise-fall-oxfam-billion-pound-charity-mired-sex-scandal/
The Times	Oxfam: abuse scandal far deeper than the headlines, says independent panel	2019	United Kingdom	O'Neill, S. (2019). Oxfam: abuse scandal far deeper than the headlines, says independent panel. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-abuse-scandal-far-deeper-than-the-headlines-says-independent-panel-wq0bmqh8
Guardian	Coronavirus could push half a billion people into poverty, Oxfam warns	2020	United Kingdom	Elliott, L. (2020). Coronavirus could push half a billion people into poverty, Oxfam warns. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/09/coronavirus-could-push-half-a-billion-people-into-poverty-oxfam-warns
The Week	How has Oxfam sex scandal affected the charity?	2020	United States	The Week. (2020). How has Oxfam sex scandal affected the charity? <i>The Week</i> . https://theweek.com/105358/how-has-oxfam-sex-scandal-affected-the-charity
Times of Israel	Charity removes anti-Semitic 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' from online store	2020	Israel	Times of Israel. (2020). Charity removes anti-Semitic 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion' from online store. <i>The Times of Israel</i> . https://www.timesofisrael.com/charity-removes-anti-semitic-protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion-from-online-store/
The Times	Oxfam asked director in bullying inquiry to stay	2020	United Kingdom	Hurst, G., & Janjua, H. (2020). Oxfam asked director in bullying inquiry to stay. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-asked-director-in-bullying-inquiry-to-stay-czfc89j7g
The New Humanitarian	Oxfam accused of 'rotten' work culture in Congo by former staff	2021	Nairobi	Dodds, P. (2021). Oxfam accused of 'rotten' work culture in Congo by former staff. <i>The New Humanitarian</i> . https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/2021/04/06/oxfam-accused-rotten-work-culture-congo-former-staff
Guardian	Oxfam GB released from supervision by watchdog after Haiti scandal reforms	2021	United Kingdom	G, S. (2021). Oxfam GB released from supervision by watchdog after Haiti scandal reforms. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/25/oxfam-gb-released-from-supervision-by-watchdog-after-haiti-scandal-reforms
Seychelles News Agency	UK suspends funding for Oxfam after DR Congo sex claims	2021	Seychells	Seychelles News Agency. (2021). UK suspends funding for Oxfam after DR Congo sex claims. <i>Seychelles News Agency</i> . http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/14636/

				UK+suspends+funding+for+Oxfam+after+DR+Cong o+sex+claims
The Times	Oxfam released from strict supervision three years after Haiti sex scandal	2021	United Kingdom	O'Neill, S. (2021). Oxfam released from strict supervision three years after Haiti sex scandal. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-released-from-strict-supervision-three-years-after-haiti-sex-scandal-vhrjlllz0
Al Jazeera	'Billionaire bonanza': Tax the rich as poverty surges – Oxfam	2022	Qatar	Al Jazeera. (2022). 'Billionaire bonanza': Tax the rich as poverty surges – Oxfam. <i>Al Jazeera</i> . https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/23/oxfam-calls-for-taxing-the-rich-as-davos-summit-returns
Guardian	Oxfam says its work in India is imperilled by ban on foreign funding	2022	United Kingdom	Dhillon, A. (2022). Oxfam says its work in India is imperilled by ban on foreign funding. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/02/oxfam-says-its-work-in-india-is-imperilled-by-ban-on-foreign-funding
The Times	Oxfam rocked by new sex claims against aid workers	2022	United Kingdom	O'Neill, S. (2022). Oxfam rocked by new sex claims against aid workers. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/oxfam-rocked-by-new-sex-claims-against-aid-workers-hv5jvhs0x
The Times	Oxfam's sneering at the rich is simplistic and unhelpful	2022	United Kingdom	Iqbal, J. (2022). Oxfam's sneering at the rich is simplistic and unhelpful. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/comment/columnists/article/oxfams-sneering-at-the-rich-is-simplistic-and-unhelpful-d6ttztc77?region=global%2Cglobal&utm
Guardian	Watchdog considers action over Oxfam cartoon of anti-trans 'hate groups'	2023	United Kingdom	Butler, P. (2023). Watchdog considers action over Oxfam cartoon of anti-trans 'hate groups'. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/07/oxfam-pride-month-cartoon-charities-watchdog
Guardian	Oxfam workers in UK to hold strike ballot over 'poverty pay'	2023	United Kingdom	Sinmaz, E. (2023). Oxfam workers in UK to hold strike ballot over 'poverty pay'. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/25/oxfam-workers-strike-ballot-poverty-pay
The Times	The Times view on Oxfam's attack on JK Rowling: Losing the Plot	2023	United Kingdom	T, L. (2023). The Times view on Oxfam's attack on JK Rowling: Losing the Plot. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/culture/books/article/the-times-view-on-oxfams-attack-on-jk-rowling-losing-the-plot-vs9j5lmpc
The Times	Charity watchdog could investigate Oxfam over trans row cartoon	2023	United Kingdom	Beal, J. (2023). Charity watchdog could investigate Oxfam over trans row cartoon. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/culture/books/article/charity-watchdog-could-investigate-oxfam-over-trans-row-cartoon-bfk7hxn5x
Sudan Tribune	Oxfam slams underfunding at Sudan humanitarian conference	2024	Sudan	Sudan Tribune. (2024). Oxfam slams underfunding at Sudan humanitarian conference. <i>Sudan Tribune</i> . https://sudantribune.com/article284582/
Guardian	M&S and Oxfam trial postal donation bags for 'unwearable' clothes	2024	United Kingdom	Wood, Z. (2024). M&S and Oxfam trial postal donation bags for 'unwearable' clothes. <i>The Guardian</i> . https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/apr/22/m-and-s-and-oxfam-trial-postal-donation-bags-for-unwearable-clothes
The Times	Oxfam's sneering at the rich is simplistic and	2024	United Kingdom	Iqbal, J. (2024). Oxfam's sneering at the rich is simplistic and unhelpful. <i>The Times</i> . https://www.thetimes.com/comment/columnists/article

	unhelpful			e/oxfams-sneering-at-the-rich-is-simplistic-and-unhelpful-d6ttzc77
AP News	Guatemalan ex-president, Oxfam chief held in corruption case	2024	United States	AP News. (2018). Guatemalan ex-president, Oxfam chief held in corruption case. <i>AP News</i> . https://apnews.com/article/27d1f59d918c468da455b97449537fd9

Appendix I:

Ethics Checklist

- No potential harm of any kind (physical, psychological or reputational) is envisaged for the researcher, participants or the population from which participants have been drawn.
- Participants are healthy adults who are not in a vulnerable position, notably in their relation with the researcher.
- Participants will give active informed consent for participation in the research.
- Participants receive complete and accurate information about the goals of the research before they participate.
- No important details about the purpose of the research are either withheld or misrepresented.
- Participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any point in (or following) the data collection process.
- Personal and sensitive data are kept confidential and are stored in a secure environment.

Appendix J:

Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Thesis

Student Information

Name: Luan Weldam

Student ID: 600389

Course Name: Master Thesis CM5000

Supervisor Name: Annet Toornstra

Date: 11-02-2025

Declaration:

While writing this thesis, I used Grammarly for spelling errors and to check my grammar. ChatGPT helped me to get an understanding of certain theoretical aspects. I asked questions like "Can you explain this theory?". Helping me to gain understanding on the topic so I could search for the appropriate literature.

Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools

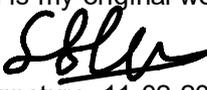
I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:

- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot) limited strictly to content that is not assessed (e.g., thesis title).
- Writing improvements, including grammar and spelling corrections (e.g., Grammarly)
- Language translation (e.g., DeepL), without generative AI alterations/improvements.
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding verification, debugging code)
- Using GenAI as a search engine tool to find academic articles or books (e.g.,

I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically [Name of the AI Tool(s) or Framework(s) Used], in the process of creating parts or components of my thesis. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of thesis work.

I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original work.

Signature: 
Date of Signature: 11-02-2025

Extent of AI Usage

I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing the thesis were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

Ethical and Academic Integrity

I understand the ethical implications and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the AI-generated content

was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately cited and attributed according to the guidelines provided by the instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature: 
Date of Signature: 11-02-2025