

**Confronting NGOs:** A critical discourse  
analysis of Norwegian NGOs'  
understanding of women's poverty in  
the global south.

KAY ARNE SØGÅRD

SUPERVISOR  
VITO LATERZA

**University of Agder, 2022**  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Department of global development and planning

## **Abstract**

Norwegian NGOs are organizations that are highly visible in the media in Norway regarding development and aid. With such a prominent place in the media and enormous visibility, these organizations influence the population in Norway with their knowledge production. There is little research into how Norwegian NGOs frame the issue of women's poverty in the global south and how this framing creates practical development interventions.

This qualitative research examines how the NGO frames women's poverty through a thematic analysis of interviews that maps the discourse of poor women in the global south and how these framings reflect the development interventions. A critical discourse analysis of documents produced by the NGOs is conducted to reveal the discourses in play when framing poor women and interventions. The analysis findings are then discussed through different theories, several of which deal with power relations. Foucault's theory of genealogy of power is used to discuss the findings in the analysis.

Through this analysis, it becomes clear that the NGOs frames poor women as women who lack skills, are ignorant and backward, and consist of women of reproductive age who live in rural areas. The discourses that are in play with the NGOs when they frame poor women and development, are discourses such as neo-Malthusian discourse, neoliberalism, classical modernization discourse, and globalization discourse. These discourses can influence the interventions and have unfortunate consequences, such as increased marginalization of women.

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## **List of abbreviations and central terms**

Covid-19: Disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2 (NHI, 2022).

NGO: Non-governmental organization.

GONGO: Government organized non-governmental organization.

WB: The world bank.

IMF: International monetary fund.

WTO: World trade organization.

WHO: world health organization.

TNC: Transnational company.

The third world: Collection of nation-states mired in poverty (Berger & Weber, 2014).

NORAD: The Norwegian agency for development cooperation. A professional body under the ministry of foreign affair (NORAD, 2022e, 6. November).

Supranational organizations: Intergovernmental organizations.

SDG: Sustainable development goal.

CSR: Corporate social responsibility.

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# 1. Introduction

Through an interesting and exciting master's degree education in global development that focuses on many relevant topics, this study ends with this last essential and instructive work. Of all these topics, I can single out gender as the most interesting and exciting topic. How do people think and speak about gender within development? I think one clearly can see gender differences when reading about development. Such differences could impact how we think and talk about development, which can lead to social injustice. Almost daily, when reading the news or watching commercials on television, NGOs are looking for attention to get donors for their projects, where they sell everything from monthly payments to one-off donations. In the fight to win attention, they use different methods to do so. It captures my attention, trying to tell a story that is supposed to convince me that I must contribute to end poverty by donating money to this organization. As large, recognized organization, I know that NGOs greatly influence the population, and I know many active donors. The NGOs spread information about development and can significantly contribute to forming the knowledge base for the population regarding development and poverty.

This is a rather powerful position when the NGOs somehow educate the population about poverty and how to combat it. At the same time, the NGOs compete for the population's attention, and they must convince by selling a "story" to attract attention. Often, "emotional" pictures are used to "arouse emotions" in people. Such presentations and information form the population's knowledge base, but do these stories and images reflect reality as it is, or are they somehow contrived or extreme to gain attention?

I knew little about the power of such "stories" and how this affects the mindset of people. Therefore, I had the desire to learn more specifically about how women in the Global South are represented by influential organizations in the West like NGOs and how this affects our understanding of poverty, women's poverty, and development.

## 1.1. Background

Reading literature on development interventions targeting women or Norwegian NGOs' advertisements on billboards and in the media, I get the impression that the interventions are quite targeted. One can read about the education offered, microfinance, and entrepreneurship,

among many other things. But how are social rights safeguarded? The NGOs then present targeted and concrete measures, which apparently will get them out of poverty as long as they donate money to the organization. It may seem very simple, or that the NGOs are sitting a solution, and the solution is quite simple in terms of the interventions. However, is it that simple, and what does this do to women's poverty?

Economy and entrepreneurship are often viewed as key routes out of poverty, while social rights seem to be side-lined. Katharine Rankin (2001) shows how microfinance is being used as a neoliberal development intervention to empower women so that they can manage to get out of poverty themselves. It is not easy to find existing literature on this topic in a Norwegian context, but there is rich international research literature. This literature shows different gender dynamics and how important the discourses that development-actors produce is in creating perceptions and approaches to gender, gender inequality, and gender justice in the global south. The lack of such research literature in a Norwegian context means that I can conduct research in a context where there has been little research done before, which makes the project innovative to a certain extent

## **1.2. Research purpose**

The NGOs to be researched are well-established actors involved in development interventions and initiatives in the global south. These organizations are established across large parts of the global south to help people out of poverty and help them meet their basic needs, and promote gender equality, among other things. As such organizations take on such a role and responsibility, it is essential to look at the discourses that come into play and shape NGOs construction of women's poverty, as this will shape the practices of the NGOs. This is important because, as Neumann (2021) explains, the discourses that development actors operate with, shape the reality they intervene in. It becomes crucial to be critical of this when such discourses are related to gender, gender relations, and gender identities in a world characterized by profound gender injustice.

As Selbervik & Østebø (2013) describe, Norway is at the "top of the world" regarding gender equality, and Norway is one of the equal countries in the world. They also argue that the gender equality policy in Norway and its development does not exist in Norwegian development policy.



This thesis aims to understand the complexity of aid and the complexity of "helping" women in the global south by mapping how development actors in Norway construct poor women in the global south through thematic analysis. When I have mapped the discourse, it will be possible to gain more insight into how poor women in the global south are portrayed and how this shapes the interventions. Such discourse will contribute to the Norwegian population's knowledge of poor women in the global south and development. Therefore, it is important to look critically at such representations, as it can, in the worst case, lead to negative consequences for those who are represented, as the Norwegian population probably will form their knowledge based on these representations.

Another purpose is to see what Foucault's theories about knowledge and power can add to understanding poor women and development as an extension of critical discourse analysis. I will use these findings in a critical analysis to analyze the different themes, interventions, and practices that shape our mindset about poverty and women. I will use Foucault's different concepts of power to analyze how practices shape individuals and groups. These are complicated theories, and I do not claim that I have understood Foucauldian theories fully.

Another factor that has contributed to the purpose is the state's responsibility for its citizens and the tendency of NGOs to take over the state's "responsibility." By reading Western development literature, this happens to a considerable extent. Therefore, I think it is very important to look at how NGOs construct women in the global south, especially where NGOs more or less take over the role of the state as the consequences of the construction may become the "universal" way of treating or interpreting women in these areas (a western way). In such cases, one can control other people more quickly with minimal resistance. One often thinks that NGOs do not want to control people where they intervene, but one must keep in mind who may finance these NGOs and their fundamental agendas. Therefore, I also want to map other actors who influence the creation of the discourse.

Not only do I create a better understanding of aid, development, and poor women in the global south, but I have also created a much better knowledge and insight into social research that is essential to containing. Completing this research does not mean that the research in this area and on this topic is complete. In this research, I have come to only a small "tab" of a huge topic. The findings can, at best, say more about how Norwegian NGOs view poverty and women in the global south, but I think I only touch the surface of the topic. The findings and analysis only

say something about the topic at this given time; the relevance may disappear over time as new knowledge is produced. There is much more to understand about NGOs, aid, poor women in the global south, and Foucault's theories. The research is open-ended, as I cannot say whether something is wrong or right or whether I have any clear statements.

The analysis is by no means finished or complete. Many more aspects of Foucault and other theories could be applied, and the topic could be analyzed in many ways and from different angles. This is an important topic for me, and the master's thesis is just the beginning of a Commitment to acquire more knowledge in this field.

### **1.3. Problem statement**

In my current studies in global development, there is much focus on the global south and development. Several students work within the aid sector, and there are many spotlights on this sector. Therefore, the topic of this research is aimed at the aid sector and five Norwegian NGOs. NGOs are some of the most prominent and visible aid actors. Therefore, it is natural for me to look to them when researching the aid sector. I am also keen to look at gender differences and equality as this is an important topic that must not be forgotten in development work. The NGOs' descriptions of gender can be decisive about how we in Norway think about women and men in the global south, and their interventions can influence and affect the gender balance.

Through this study, I have learned to be critical. Even what looks innocent and has good intentions often have unintended negative consequences. When looking at Norwegian NGOs and their advertisements for eradicating poverty and working for women's well-being, these can seem like good projects. The NGOs can gain massive support among the citizens of Norway, and one feels obliged to contribute to the NGOs being able to carry out their projects. We must be critical, look at what the NGOs do, and investigate the "invisible" effects. How do NGOs shape the discourse of poor women in the global south? What do they think about poverty, and how do these thoughts or contractions translate into interventions?

I have become concerned with the "invisible" power that surrounds us all and what effect the power has in the context of NGOs development programs. Therefore, after mapping the discourse about poor women in the global south from an empirical point of view, I focus on the concept of power. I will analyze findings from data and revolve this around the concept of different power aspects.

I will use Foucault's theories concerning governance and power, and other relevant theories. Foucault believes power is not something that is "imposed" from above or that springs from ideology but lies in all social relations and is played out in countless micro-relations with diverse effects (Andersen & Kaspersen, 2013). This means that power and resistance are mutually effective. It makes it interesting to look at how power and governance unfold through how the NGOs portray women and are in direct contact with the women when the NGOs organize a development project.

I am interested in how governance connects with knowledge and how this can shape our "view" of poor women in the global south. But also, how development projects contain certain "procedures" that help to shape the individuals who participate in the project and how they experience themselves as subjects in such an aid project.

problem statement:

*“There is not enough research on how Norwegian NGOs frame the issue of women's poverty in the global south, and on how this framing creates practical development interventions to end women's poverty.”*

Power is not just, as some would think, that the NGO possesses resources that the women in the global south need, and that there is a one-way power relationship. Resistance can be offered and could affect the NGOs

There are many interesting aspects, not least when reading the "Foucauldian" theory. I must limit the use of Foucault's theories at some point. The delimitation lies in the selection of theoretical topics listed in the literature review, which are relevant to illuminating my questions. I also limit myself to researching five Norwegian NGOs with somewhat different foundations to explore the differences or similarities between the NGOs. I used the most recent documents they had produced when the research was carried out and did not go back more than a couple of years when obtaining documents. This is because NGOs acquire new knowledge frequently, and I want to capture today's view of poverty. The limitations come at the expense of other essential theories and angles that could be useful, but due to the scope of the research, I must limit the research to what is selected.

## **1.4. Research questions**

There is two main research question, and three sub-questions (RQ1, RQ1.1., RQ1.2., RQ1.3 and RQ2). These are questions that form the basis for being able to say something about the discourse: poor women in the global south. These reveal what the NGOs believe are the causes of poverty and which interventions that follows up. The last sub-question helps to uncover other actors that influence the discourse, which are actors that could hard to discover without further investigation.

*RQ1. How do Norwegian NGOs frame the issue of women´s poverty in the global south, and how do these framings shape practical development interventions to end women´s poverty?*

*RQ1.1. What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important causes of woman´s poverty in the global south?*

*RQ1.2. What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important strategies for ameliorating and/or ending women´s poverty in the global south?*

*RQ1.3. Which actors influence the NGO's way of framing women's poverty in the global south and the strategies?*

*RQ2. What other discourses are at play, framing the issue of women's poverty?*

## **1.5. Context of the study**

The research is carried out by addressing five large aid organizations (NGOs) in Norway. Those aid organizations are headquartered in Norway, meaning the research occurred in Norway. Data collection is primarily from documents, meaning that most of the work occurred from my office and campus. However, documents have their limitations in the text. One is welcome to present an analysis of meaning structures in a text. However, it is not guaranteed that this reflects what happens in practice when project strategies are implemented. Especially important for this research is what shapes the creation of different project strategies or how an organization will focus on a specific type of development project. Therefore, I had to conduct in-depth interviews of what I could get hold of from staff within the selected NGOs. Since these selected organizations are headquartered in Norway, I could conduct those interviews in this country.

I used documents of recent dates containing strategies, goals, descriptions of development, and aid programs to discover relevant discourses.

All documents I used are open to the public. I also looked at the different projects of each organization, and the projects I looked at are located in the global south. I am not looking at projects in the West or global north, and I do not want to specify where in the global south the projects are presented. The location where the NGOs intervene is not of great relevance, other than that it is in the global south or the non-west.

When I invited the NGOs for an interview, I had yet to get a response from any of them NGOs, and I wondered why they did not respond to my emails. I assumed that it might be that I did not reach the "right" person in the NGOs, or it was due to the nature of the research. In other words, it is a critical analysis, and I can understand this well, as it is a critical analysis. Using the NGO's name in such an analysis can turn out to be unfortunate when someone, for example, googles the NGO's name and results from a critical analysis appear. Therefore, I sent the email again, and this time with the reservation that the name of the NGO and the interview subjects would be kept anonymous. Then I received responses from all NGOs, and they were willing to participate. However, it should be mentioned that only public documents have been used in the analysis.

## **1.6. Thesis synopsis**

The process is characterized by the development of my understanding and interpretation; therefore, the structure and process have been developed along the way. This thesis proceeds as follows:

### *Chapter 2 – Literature Review*

After the introduction comes the literature review, which ties together relevant literature, research questions, and the analysis. The literature review contains knowledge that covers the overall themes in this thesis. The literature revolves around theories of power developed by Foucault, population theory, and literature from ethnographic research that shows different gender dynamics. This theory forms the basis for the discussion of the analysis.

### *Chapter 3 – Methodology*

In this chapter, details from the entire process of the research project are presented, and I describe where the research stands from a scientific theoretical perspective and then describe

the analysis strategy that has been chosen for the research. The chapter includes how data is collected and analyzed. The research's methods for this research are semi-structured interviews with five different NGOs and consist of obtaining existing documents. Data is then analyzed by a thematic analysis, where I try to map the discourse, followed up by a critical discourse analysis. Next, central themes and discourses are discussed against existing literature as reviewed in the literature review.

#### *Chapter 4 – Findings and analysis*

The findings from the interviews and documents are shared here. The themes that emerge from the thematic analysis and frames the poor women and form the basis for interventions are presented in this chapter. The findings of the discourse analysis uncover other established discourses that shape the discourse's formation: poor women in the global south. The main structure of this chapter is to map how the discourse frames poor women and how this framing reflects the practices. The chapter will go through each NGO separately and present the findings, then the findings of each NGO is compared.

#### *Chapter 5 - Discussion*

In the discussion, I used two topics that I find particular interesting, and that I think is vital to the research. This chapter links power and other theories to some of the findings.

#### *Chapter 6 – Conclusion*

This chapter will give a short overview of the thesis content and conclude the research question based on the findings. Further, the research limitations, policy recommendations, and recommendations for further research will be presented.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Poverty and development**

Established concepts that repeat themselves in all the NGOs are the concepts of development and poverty. Poverty is described somewhat more simply, but development could have different meanings. People often think that development has a linear progression where we constantly improve, but this is not always the case. The term development as we know it has been used for many years and can be traced back hundreds of years. One can trace the concept of development back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with rationalism and humanism linked to the idea of evolution. This was the age of enlightenment, where it was assumed that science would be able to develop barbarism into civilization. Those who did not subscribe to such a way of thinking were seen as backward and traditional (Potter et al., 2004, p.6). Backward and traditional is something repeated by all the NGOs in the research, where the woman is described as backward and traditional. The analysis shows how such a way of describing women is prominent today and how such thoughts reflect a linear development towards a modern society with values like those of the West.

In the nineteenth century, Darwinism combines development with evolution within Western social theory. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and with the industrial revolution, development was then linked to economy and progress. In other words, a form of capitalist industrialization that leads to modernization, where one begins to distinguish between rich and poor, forms a society with class divisions (Potter et al., 2004, p.6). Poverty is now becoming an essential theme in the development discourse, and to be shown in the findings in the analysis where the interventions often are linked to neoliberal thinking.

The British Empire significantly influenced the world, especially in the West. British feminism also emerged during the British Empire, heavily influenced by British culture (Burton, 1990, p.295). Burton (1990, pp.295–296) believes that British culture influenced British feminism with a sense of national superiority based on imperial status. Women in India were used as an example, and British feminists saw these women as unfortunate and needing to be rescued by "British sisters." They were not seen as equals, as they believed that the Anglo-Saxon race was superior and used the British Empire to prove this. These feminists created a racial hegemony where British women were considered the highest female type one could achieve (Burton, 1990,

pp. 295–296). Few British women knew about India, but India was still believed to consist mainly of female prostitutes (Burton, 1999, p.300). British feminism contributed to shaping the concept of development at this time. The British woman considered herself to be something superior with the responsibility to help the helpless prostituted women in India. Such a way of thinking can be linked to neo-Malthusian theory and eugenics movements. The analysis of how Norwegian NGOs frame poor women bear traces of focusing on "saving" the women due to a significant overpopulation with family planning and concrete measures to reduce the number of births.

Although the term development can be found hundreds of years ago, it was after the Truman doctrine after World War II, while the United States was prospering and Europe was ruined, receiving aid from the United States, that the term development and the production of the Third World took hold. One had ambitions that everyone should achieve what "developed" society had: good conditions, growth, industry, and urbanization (Escobar, A. 1995, pp.3-4). This created a new way of looking at oneself and others through a dichotomy of developed and underdeveloped of them and us. As Esteva (2010, pp.2) describes it, on 20 January 1949, 2 billion people became underdeveloped on the same day.

Modernity becomes a product of extracting out the Third World, where one puts the West's industrialization and materialistic prosperity as the modern and developed. Kuhn (1962) in Potter (2004, pp.81) claims that the dominant scientific discipline defines the subject and the essential issues. One can say that the West and Norway are characterized by materialistic prosperity and the economic model of neoliberalism.

Rostow's universal development model believes that all countries that are to be developed must go through five steps to be developed. These steps are five steps in economic growth: the traditional society, the precondition to take off, the drive to maturity, and the age of mass consumption (Potter et al., 2004, p. 89). This is part of a classical and neoliberal development theory which has become the classical-traditional way of approaching the issue of development, with this modernization as a goal. This makes it interesting to look at the NGOs' approach in this research to see if they follow a classic modern theory or if the way of thinking has changed after many years of new knowledge and insight into development issues.



There are several ways to measure poverty, where clear boundaries are drawn for when one is considered poor. There is much criticism concerning poverty calculations, where clear boundaries are set between poor and extreme poverty, or where GDP per. Capita should be able to give an overall picture of poverty in each country. This is problematic as the distribution of resources is fundamentally uneven both within and between states.

To give an overview of how extensive poverty is concerning wealth and capital, 62 people alone in 2015 owned as much welfare as the 3.6 billion poorest people. This difference is still increasing as global welfare continues to concentrate (Selwyn, 2017, p.3). The difference between the rich and poor is expanding globally, and one can see that fighting poverty is becoming a bigger and bigger part of the tasks that the NGOs want to tackle. Such a fight can be seen in the context of the sustainability goals that stand strong today. Introducing a poverty line that does not distinguish between the poor and the non-poor is highly discriminatory. Firstly, the line is far too low, and how big a difference in poverty is there when one person falls just below the limit and one just above? At the same time, when such a line is introduced, poverty is transformed into something quantifiable and, in this case, into something economical. The economy only reflects part of the picture of poverty. What about security, and social rights, for example? The World Bank is an example of an actor that measures poverty through economics. They have set a poverty line that several nations and organizations follow. The World Bank is a resourceful supranational actor in the worldview, especially in the West, producing much knowledge about the global south.

This is a simplified way of defining poor and non-poor through income measurement (Selwyn, 2017, pp. 22-25). However, it does not say whether the woman gets to keep her income herself or whether it is the husband or other family members who take the money the woman earns. Nor does it say anything about the workload of women or the health services they can access. What about unpaid work? What burden do the women carry from before? An example to illustrate that making poverty something measurable is unfavorable is the World Bank's poverty line for extreme poverty, which is \$2.15 a day (The World Bank, 2022). What about those who make \$3? Then one is no longer extremely poor?

Defining women in specific ways can lead to putting a label on who is poor and who she is, for whom action is being taken, and who is not. Labels can come from classical modernization theory, where women are labeled as underdeveloped and backward, with western modernity as

the target for intervention. Such labels can have consequences for women, and the sub-chapter below shows how this can happen with an empirical example. In the "ripple effect," one has profit as the goal for this labeling, and one can ask questions about what the goal of the NGOs might be if they label the women in particular ways. Such labeling of women can come from several reasons in the case of NGOs, as they are influenced by several quarters, which is explained in the description of actors who influence the NGOs.

## **2.2. "Ripple effect"**

In Moeller (2018), The girl effect deals with the portrayal of women where they are presented in specific ways to "arouse emotions" in the target population so that they buy a specific product. The focus is on portraying girls and poverty, where they must look poor enough, and this is a way of making poverty "saleable."

For example, the project Girl effect evolved during a criticism directed at Nike, where they, in their production, exploited poor women to work long shifts with poor conditions. Large international companies, such as Nike, have a social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) shows Moeller (2018) with gender effect, where they use a particular strategy to increase profits in the long run. The girl effect project invests in poor, racialized adolescent girls in the global south, which should provide a "ripple effect." It should end poverty, promote economic growth, and reduce fertility rates. As mentioned earlier, the fertility rate is an important factor in the outcome of the analysis, which is aimed at neo-Malthusianism and eugenics, as all NGOs describe the fertility rate as a major cause of poverty or continued poverty. Gender effect also uses this mindset that I write about, where women and girls are homogenized and portrayed as effective neoliberal agents. Such recognition can be found in the analysis, where the women are homogenized and described as only living in the countryside and of a specific age. The girl effect project is based on a statistic that says that if one invests in girls, one will get 90% in return, while only 30% in boys. The girls are portrayed as victims who must be saved and saved by those who have the power to save them (Moeller, 2018).

The gender effect does not look at the structural problems of gender inequality but focuses on what girls can do for development. This is also something that corresponds to the analysis, where the interventions, for example, focus on local measures aimed at individuals who have to lift themselves out of poverty. Moeller (2018) also shows how many poor and marginalized

people are excluded from the program as they do not fit Nike's profile. This includes pregnant girls who did not have the "right" age, background, or culture or lacked what the Nike foundation had created; «The third world potential. »

How poor women are framed, where they are given the responsibility of lifting themselves out of poverty, is to be found in the analysis where neoliberalist methods where entrepreneurship is a keyword. This is therefore linked with the chapter below, which deals with neoliberalism.

### **2.3. Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is a theory of a political-economic practice that began to dominate the "West" from 1978-1980 onwards. This theory aims at the liberalization of people's freedom to be entrepreneurs, together with a thought where the private property stands firmly together with a free market and free trade (Harvey, 2007, p.2). With this theory, the state gets a minor role concerning the market and trade. Instead, it should promote a free market where it guarantees the integrity of money, secures the society with police and military, and secures the freedom of private property. The state's role in facilitating freedom of private property and a free market extends to the fact that, if there is no market, it must facilitate its existence if necessary (Harvey, 2007, p.2).

In Norway, it is seen that municipalities and the state facilitate a functional market, and it is expected that they take on the "expensive and necessary" costs of for example, infrastructure. Neoliberalism is broadly widespread internationally. International institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) carry a neoliberal mindset. The same can be found in "western" universities and educational institutions (Harvey, 2007, p.3).

We will also see in the analysis that the NGOs focus strongly on this when it comes to interventions. The question then is about what the NGOs are doing to ensure that the state assumes costs and ensures that a free market can be established. Neoliberalism acts as a guide to human action, where human social goods will be maximized with increased market transactions (Harvey, 2007, p.3). One can also see the absence of the state as problematic in some cases, where the state no longer takes on responsibilities such as health care to preserve

its population, which leads the citizens to obtain enough money to afford adequate healthcare. The same applies to education and schooling in some states.

Rankin (2001) shows and describes a shift from a state-led organization to market-led interventions, where the state disclaims responsibility for making financial capital available to the rural poor and where everyone is responsible for their well-being and must ensure financial opportunity themselves. More specifically, Rankin (2001) uses microfinance to describe this transition. Microfinance is seen as a win-win situation where donors can make a profit, and the poor have access to new resources, but what Rankin argues is that credit does not guarantee a transformation, and it may also exacerbate gender inequality. The obstacle to women's empowerment lies in gender ideologies in society and not in the availability of loans. Soederberg (2014) calls this the poverty industry, constructed and reproduced by capitalist interests. Soederberg also argues that there is a social power in money that is reinforced by this framework it is part of. Inequality is distorted and hidden by the freedom given by voluntary consent, where class division and exploitation are hidden as Harvey (2010) in Soederberg (2014) explains, the capitalist system hides the real social relation.

As Rankin (2001) confirms in this article, there is an increased focus on women as a target for intervention, as they are considered to spend money more sensibly. In a shift where NGOs are becoming more prominent and taking over certain functions that the state should have, there is also an increase in the professionalization of NGOs. Hodzic (2014) describes this transition as a concern, as he looks at NGOization, where developmental ideology is reproduced through homogenization and universalization of discourses from the modern state.

A change from a resistance movement to an organization, where resistance becomes a 9-5 paid day job where the donor-driven agenda stops the women's movements. This links this topic to the chapter below, where two forms of organization are described. NGO and government-organized non-governmental organization (GONGO). There is no specific GONGO organization in this research, but the analysis describes, under the chapter on actors, what influence the state has on the NGOs in this research. In an extension of neoliberalism, global production networks (GPN) are a relevant topic to participate in the world market in an increasingly "globalized" world. GPNs are networks that connect or weave together the organizations in the world in network structures. This means that the organizations' boundaries are more blurred because they are no longer fixed organizations within a state but operate across

national borders. The organizations will always have a spatial foundation so that the state it belongs to will be a vital factor influencing political structures (Dicken, 2015, pp. 60-61). It is not only the state that regulates but supranational institutions such as the IMF and WTO, and in Europe, one also has the EU. This means one is already enrolled in complex trade, distribution, and production structures. This requires cooperation between these actors and transnational companies (TNCs).

When the NGOs carry out development projects in states abroad, they must also cooperate with such institutions and structures. This is also due to the Norwegian state's influence on the NGOs and the Norwegian state cooperating with other states and supranational actors. About 80% of world trade occurs through GPNs, which is why Phillips (2017, p.430-431) calls this the "spine" of the world economy. GPNs and TNCs depend on several input factors, such as technology, services, energy, logistics, and perhaps the most important: finance (Dicken, 2015, p.54). The operations must be organized and coordinated with the input factors, which requires control over the requirements and regulations imposed by states and institutions. This coordination of the production process from idea to a finished product requires many different inputs such as extraction, engineering, research & design, production, transport, and others. These input factors can take place in different places in the world, depending on where it is most practical regarding access to knowledge, technology, labor, infrastructure, market, or other functions the operations depend on (Dicken, 2015, p.2015: 58). All levels of the production cycle create a certain amount of value for the product. Since there is an imbalance in the power relations in the networks, the return of value creation will be unevenly distributed (Dicken, 2015, pp. 253-255).

One word that is connected to this sub-chapter, but also a word that often recurs when talking about development in general, among other themes as well, is globalization. Perhaps one of the most used words these days. *Globalization* is a relatively new word that has increased in meaning over the past 15 years. Globalization can be described as an intensification of global interconnectedness linked to capitalism, cultures, society, and politics (Potter et al., 2004, pp. 126-127). Social relationships increase, time and place take on a different meaning to us, with new and better communication technologies, so that people can get hold of each other and collaborate across national borders and is a post-modern phenomenon (Potter et al., 2004, pp. 126-127). This can lead to a more accessible organization concerning capitalism and production

chains and promote better collaboration and influence. People get easier access to information and information.

The section below shows how NGO and state cooperation has both advantages and disadvantages, which will be discussed in the chapter on actors. Neoliberal interventions that several of the NGOs carry out are also themes that best demonstrate Foucauldian forms of power in this research.

## **2.4. NGOs and GONGOs**

There are many different interests associated with NGOs, and maybe agenda-driven funding. Therefore, looking at the organizational form of NGOs and how they are financed is natural. In Sharma's (2014, p.97-100) example, the field workers use the term NGO and government-organized non-governmental organization (GONGO) as appropriate, and there is no uniform presentation of the organization. They use GONGO in some cases to increase credibility and, in other cases, NGOs where people are skeptical of government bureaucracy.

The positive element Sharma (2014, p.95-100) shows with this is that if the women mobilize, for example, a form of women's movement and are confronted by public figures, they can point out that they are a form of state actors so that they get their right to speak and get respect from local officials. While being partially state-owned, marginalized women can learn public information, bureaucracy, and methods that can empower women. There are also several disadvantages to being partially state-owned. Some factors that can be mentioned could be that one does not trust the state, and the state can be associated with heavy bureaucracy, among many other things.

When an NGO operates abroad, it can impact those affected by the organization's organizational form and how the NGO will be met. It will also impact the state where the intervention is carried out, as state affiliation will officially be able to carry with its political interests that do not need to be compatible with the host state. This shows that NGOs come with many faces and are influenced by different actors and networks, making such organizations more complicated than they appear. When NGOs intervene abroad, they will also be influenced by the host state, and there must be a particular dialogue or interaction with that state and its laws and regulations. At the same time, the NGO is influenced by their mother state's policies, especially with regard to

the use of state funding. Nevertheless, as the research shows in the chapter dealing with actors, one can see that it can be challenging to distinguish between NGOs and GONGOs, even if the NGO claims to be independent of the mother state.

## **2.5. Neo-Malthusianism**

Neo-Malthusianism is linked, as mentioned, to overpopulation, and the analysis reveals conditions that such a theory can address. Especially considering their statements and interventions aimed at overpopulation, such as contraception education. The fact that NGOs operate with such a mindset as recognized actors with many resources could be problematic regarding eugenics movements. Furthermore, as actors influenced by the Norwegian state, these NGOs have much power as actors that intervene with marginalized people.

Thomas Malthus wrote a pessimistic essay on the principle of population in 1798, describing that the population increases faster than food production and supply cannot keep up. He recommended that population growth had to be regulated to be able to produce enough food for everyone. He writes that the tension between the population and the resources is the cause of much of the misery of the world's population at the time (Potter et al., 2004, p.182). Malthus is an often-cited author because of this population theory, and there is a significant discussion regarding population theory and several theories that build up under Malthus's theory. However, several theories refute his claims (Potter et al., 2004, pp. 182-183). In recent history, one can see that Malthus's theory of population is relevant, as the club of Rome builds on Malthus's theory in the 1970s, where they believe that the world is at a "breaking point" in terms of resources concerning population and demands, where the people must now try to balance the population concerning available resources. However, as mentioned, there are counterarguments for this, which tells more optimistic thoughts about the relationship between population and resources. Ester Boserup wrote in 1965 that population growth could be a key to becoming more innovative and to adapt the environment in such a way that one produces food more efficiently and in a sustainable way (Potter et al., 2004, p.182)

I argue that Eugenics is essential to mention concerning Malthus' population theory. This is a theory that was developed in the 1920s by Alexander Carr-Saunders (Bashford & Levine, 2012, p.1). The origin of this theory can be traced back to theories about population and Darwin's theory of natural and sexual selection in nature and is a theory that explains racial improvement

and planned breeding (Bashford & Levine, 2012). There have been several eugenics movements since the theory's origin, where the aim has been to influence reproductive practice. The practices have different characteristics where attempts have been made to prevent life with abortions, sterilization, and contraception, but also by generating more life as a treatment for infertility. This could be, for example, to reproduce race or class. Eugenics movements have been so extreme that they have ended the lives of the disabled with euthanasia, and where they do not treat newborns (Bashford & Levine, 2012, pp. 1-2).

This is a theory that demands social control. One can also link such theory to racism, for example, by looking at "The Third Reich" to Britain and the class issue where the urban poor were a eugenic problem and to apartheid (Bashford & Levine, 2012, pp. 2-5). Klausen & Beshford in Beshford & Levine (2012, p.5) refer to "the third world," and how it links to Neo-Malthusians and eugenics theory, and how this can be handled and how to intervene.

This theory is tied to the theories below, where power comes into view and can tell something about how the use of power can shape women to accept interventions similar to eugenics movements as described above.

## **2.6. Sovereignty, disciplinary power and biopower**

Foucault's contribution to understanding power is a significant contribution to social science that is often repeated in literature and in several lectures in the master's program I have completed. The understanding of power that Foucault brings replaces an understanding of power that has dominated the social sciences, where power was seen as the sovereign's authority to exercise obedience, coercion, and violence against the population, at the same time, power was understood as ideology (Eliassen, 2016, p.118). In the 3 following sub-chapters, I will elaborate on a genealogy of power which together forms the basis for the microphysics of power, or as governmentality (Eliassen, 2016, p.121-122).

These power theories can be used to shed light on most themes in this research, but I use parts of them in some cases in the analysis. This is a genealogy of Foucault's perspectives on power. All the parts are not necessarily dealt with equally in the analyses, as the theory is also used to understand the genesis of power and will help form the context for understanding power.



### **2.6.1. Sovereign power**

The sovereign's highest goal was power over wealth and land, where taxes and coercion were its forms of subjectivation, as power works through obedience (Eliassen, 2016, p.140). The sovereign's power can also be seen in the rise of state formations where power is exercised through law and institutions (Eliassen, 2016, p.118). The legal subject then becomes the form of subjectivation in power (Eliassen, 2016, p.1409).

Foucault defined *sovereignty* as the power that springs from "The right to take life and let live" (Foucault, 1979a, p.136., in Dean, 2010, p.124). The power gives full authority over a specific geographical area over a specific population, and the sovereign's power is also the state's power. However, it must be specified that there are several theories and interpretations of the sovereign, and these are not universal. The theory of the sovereign from Western Europe in the Middle Ages states that the sovereign ruled in a limited territory, and the principal methods the sovereign used were the law carried out with sanctions and the right to take life with the sword as a symbol (Dean, 2010, pp. 124-125).

This form of power differs from disciplinary power and biopower, which have the individual and the population as their focus to govern things. One can see this emergence simultaneously as mercantilism and the first policing institutions that emerge, and the law expresses the sovereign's power (Dean, 2010, p.126).

### **2.6.2. Disciplinary power – Production of the subject**

Discipline will be one of the essential tools I will use in this research to analyze findings from empirical data. To understand how discipline unfolds and functions in today's modern society, I use Foucault's book *discipline and punish* (Foucault, 1975/1977) as a basis. The book provides a history or genealogy of the changes in how to punish criminals. At the beginning of the book, Foucault describes two very different methods of treating a criminal, and these two methods are separated by only a century in time. Early in the first chapter, a criminal who is punished by torture and execution is described as follows:

On 2 March 1757 damiens the regicide was condemned 'to make the amende honorable before the main door of the church of Paris', where he was to be 'taken and conveyed in a cart, wearing nothing but a shirt, holding a torch of burning wax weighing two pounds', then, in the said cart, to the Place de Gréve, where, on a scaffold that will be

erected there, the flesh will be torn from his breasts, arms, thighs and calves with red-hot pincers, his right hand, holding the knife with which he committed the said parricide, burnt with sulphur, and, on those places where the flesh will be torn away, poured molten lead, boiling oil, burning resin, wax and sulphur melted together and then his body drawn and quartered by four horses and his limbs and body consumed by fire, reduced to ashes and his ashes thrown to the winds'

(Pièces originales..., 372-4 in Foucault, 1975/1977, p.3).

Furthermore, a completely different way of punishing criminals is described. A punishment that takes place only 80 years after the description of the torture the criminal was subjected to. The description tells of a strict and carefully planned regime the prisoner must endure in a Paris prison. It starts with the inmate's day starting precisely at 06 in the morning, and at a signal, the inmate must get dressed in silence, at signal number two, the inmate must be fully dressed and make his bed, then report to line-up at the third signal. Furthermore, the inmate must work, eat, attend the prison's school, and so on until bedtime, which is on a scheduled time. The criminal's entire day and night are carefully planned and fixed with a timetable. The criminal must follow this system and is not given any time for other activities (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.6-7). This is reminiscent of a modern prison similar to one in the west today.

These are two completely different ways of treating or punishing criminals, from torturing a person and public execution to a fixed schedule in prison. It is probably difficult to imagine the first method of public execution in today's society, and one likes to think that we have "moved on" and developed for the better. This appears as a history of the development of the penal system. However, as Foucault shows in the book, how we punish criminals significantly impacts how we organize society today and where power lies. It is more like a genealogy of power.

As I interpret Foucault, the first method of punishment with torture and execution takes place as a public spectacle in a time when the king is the sovereign. That is the power of the sovereign. The penal system or method is not about justice, or that one measures punishment based on crime performed, but to maintain order in society and preserve the power as the sovereign. Foucault (1975/1977, p. 47) describes that an attack on the sovereign, is also a personal attack since the power of the law is the power of the prince. Furthermore, Foucault confirms that «The

right to punish, therefore, is an aspect of the sovereign's right to make war on his enemies: to punish belongs to that absolute power of life and death" (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.48).

These descriptions confirm my interpretation that the sovereign maintains power by punishing criminals through torture and executions as a public spectacle. It is a way of showing the power to frighten and warn. This is the power of the sword, or the power to end life. By making it a spectacle with an audience, the sovereign reminds the public of who is in power and what the consequences could be if social order is not maintained. Cracking down on all types of crime could tame the population so that crime should not occur as the punishment is always harsh.

As mentioned, one can see that the criminal act is taken personally by the sovereign. The fact that the crime is thought to be aimed directly at the sovereign and that the sovereign has the power and must ensure social order can be linked to social contract theory.

Thomas Hobbes claimed that the natural state of people is governed by selfishness, greed, and aggressiveness, and therefore the sovereign must in order to create or maintain social order by coercion. People appoint a sole ruler who, with a social contract, must be able to force people to obey the law with the sword (Andersen & Kaspersen, 2013, p. 274). It also requires that the population have a contract as a citizen that must be followed up.

This way of punishing the body begins to decline at the end of the eighteenth century and loses its form, as Foucault depicted the sovereign's power at the start of this chapter. In other words, the body as a target decreases, and one reduces inflicted pain. Torture and execution no longer become as much of a public spectacle (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.8). There are several reasons why such a change occurs, but important factors that contributed to such a change are that the public began to feel a certain kind of pity for the criminal. Especially when they begin to think that the punishment exceeds the criminal act committed, the people who carry out the torture and execution end up being "ashamed to kill" (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.9). Such pity causes the public to start taking the criminal's side, and by doing this, one questions the sovereign's authority. The changes occur because of the public will and confirm that the people's will can affect the sovereign's power. The sovereign's power is unstable.

The transition shifts from inflicting pain on the body to the criminal himself feeling shame. To feel shame is, in a way, control over the mind, and at the same time, it is necessary to be able to manipulate the criminal's body. This is made more "invisible" by introducing several new techniques involving doctors, teachers, and chaplains for this purpose (Foucault, 1975/1977,

p.10-11). In this way, one can see that one goes from the sovereign's power to take life towards controlling the criminal's "soul" and producing knowledge about the criminals, as one now includes several "professionals." Before, people executed and did not assess the crime, but now the body must be assessed, manipulated, and punished according to the nature of the crime. In this way, one shapes the subject. It is no longer the criminal who must be punished, but it is the crime that must be punished (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.18). Over the years, this evolution continues with public executions disappearing and new, better methods emerging. An example is that the criminal should not feel pain during the execution. Eventually, everything happens inside prisons without the public present and without individuals being defined as someone who execute.

The emergence of knowledge is becoming essential in being able to judge. What was the criminal act, was the criminal psychotic at the time of the crime, who committed the criminal act, and what laws should be used to punish the given act? What would be the best method to rehabilitate the criminal? What were the social factors that triggered the crime? These questions and techniques developed with time and modernity (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.18-19). Furthermore, psychosis is mentioned as a question that came up in examining the criminal. This means one begins to differentiate between the mentally ill and the criminal. In other words, the emergence of knowledge, where normal and abnormal are distinguished, and the basis for the "correct" norm is formed.

This is recognizable in the methods the NGOs intervene in some cases, especially regarding education and training, frequently used projects to end poverty. They are described as backward with a dysfunctional culture, where they are taught the right way to manage their lives. In particular, one sees this link to a neoliberal way of thinking where women must learn to be entrepreneurs, as mentioned below in the analysis of neoliberalism. The way I interpret this, one now finds another way to retain power and a new way to preserve social order while maintaining power, only differently and subtly.

The historical roots of the discipline, Foucault refers to the soldiers and military. The soldier's body is something that can be made and shaped. One can recognize a soldier from a distance by how they dress and behave. The soldiers have common features, and they are alike and behave in the same way. To make this happen, one must shape them, but first, one must make them docile so they can be manipulated. The soldier's body is then shaped into a productive and

useful soldier (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.135-136). This confirms that the focus is at the individual level.

As emerges from the analysis, the vast majority of interventions are aimed at individuals and not at structures. It is still the Individuals that are disciplined and not the entire population. Foucault (1975/1977, p. 135–149) describes techniques for disciplining the criminal. One of these techniques is fixed place. In terms of prison, this will be confinement and demarcated from others. Moreover, when one is cut off from others and confined in a room filled with predefined activities, this is the start of individualization of subjectification. Furthermore, the activity is controlled. Controlling the activity reflects the timetable that Foucault described at the beginning, where the criminal's activities are carefully planned, for example, dressing at given times, eating at given times, working, and more. This activity is related to both "time" and "norm." Organizing time also requires a particular form of visibility. In prison, this could be visibility for guards so that deviations from the established norm could be cracked down on (Foucault, 1975/1977, p. 148-152). The visibility will be able to expose the deviations.

In summary, discipline works through three essential factors: constant hierarchical monitoring and a normalization judgment, a standard of how an obedient or good criminal should behave given by superiors in positions of power, and thorough examination. Foucault (1975/1977, p.183) lists which factor that's normalizes, and this can be that one compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, and excludes. One can compare the criminal with the group to see if he deviates from the norm. A combination of monitoring and normalization constitutes the third point, examination. An examination makes visible and classifies the individual with its measurements. The criminals are documented and made the subject of research and analysis where, for example, doctors, psychologists, or others can systematically obtain knowledge about the individual, contributing to general knowledge. This examination will and can provide an answer to whether the criminal must be sanctioned or corrected (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.170-192).

Foucault (1975/1977, p.200-2009) describes Bentham's panopticon as an ideal structure of a prison. I generally retell it and sum it up simply where there is a central tower where the guards stand. Surrounding the tower are the prison cells, where the prisoners sit one by one in each cell. The cells have two windows. One at the back that lets the sunlight in and a large one that faces the control tower. This allows the guard in the tower to see all the criminals and every

move they make. The inmates cannot see the guard because of the light that is let through. The tower is then, in a way, darkened, and the guards are invisible to the inmate. Then all the prisoners can be observed, and they do not know when they are being observed, so they are forced to behave as if they are constantly being observed. This way of maintaining power can also be transferred to today's society. It is a form of power over mind over mind and is used in the military, schools, factories, workplaces, universities and more. Foucault believes this is an essential mechanism as it automates and dis-individualizes power (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.202).

I will give an example of how this disciplinary form of power operates today in modern society by showing how a factory produces good employees. To be able to exercise power over the employees, they must feel that they are free and not in prison or subject to power. They must have enough freedom or long enough "chains" to feel free. The workplace or factory has a specific location as a separate production room. The workplace then sets up criteria for what a good employee is. The employee must, for example, produce a desired or specific amount, develop himself, and perhaps have some goals. This is the norm, and the employee will try to achieve this himself of his own free will. The employee polices himself. At the workplace, the employee checks in exactly when the working day starts. E.g., at 07:00, one takes a lunch break at 12 and checks out of work at 3. Time is carefully planned so production can be controlled as efficiently as possible. In the workplace, there are often cameras. Some supervisors monitor production and ensure there is order and the employee is effective and productive. The supervisor can do this by looking over the specific location and will quickly detect deviations. What is produced via data is monitored and checked with control programs. In the workplace, there is often a norm about how to dress, some places, one wears a suit. In some places, one wears overalls. One chooses to dress correctly to be a good employee and to fit in. Imagine a person arriving at the workplace wearing nothing but underwear, as wearing underwear can be a comfortable outfit. It is comfortable, but is it suitable regarding the norms? Furthermore, one behaves well at work, is a good team player, polite to others, and respects the supervisor. Many workplaces have monthly evaluations or staff meetings where the employee's performance is reviewed. Often, the employee can make wishes and input, so one feels free and can influence. A main task for the management in such an evaluation may be to find out what the employee has performed in terms of work. If one lags behind the others/the norm and what's expected, the management can create a plan with goal achievement together with the employee

that the employee is to be reached within a period of time. Data or examination can produce data that can be analyzed to create new knowledge about efficiently organizing a workplace.

This power can be seen in many other institutions as well, but not only in institutions outside as well when one disciplines oneself in everyday life. As I will show later, this is also important in the NGOs' projects, where one has discussion groups, teaching, and trying to change the way women behave. These are highly effective methods of power at an individual level, and they are so embedded in our society that one does not notice them or see them. Just imagine the primary school, where the children are sent to here in the west, where they are disciplined, and the curriculum is chosen by whom? And why? Ask the question of how you present yourself online on social media. Why? Last night I looked in the mirror and stepped directly onto my bathroom scale. I agreed with myself that I needed to lose 5kg ASAP. Why? Maybe because the media decides what is a beautiful body and the ideal in today's society, I happily sit in my flat and cause discomfort by eating only carrots to adapt to my ideal weight or a beautiful body. This makes me an active participant in this system. A system that helps to ensure that such power structures continue to exist.

Initially, one could see that the sovereign tortured and executed as a public spectacle to ensure peace and order in society. This technique of power is the same now as it was then. Are our modern methods of punishment fair? Is that why we punish? It seems that the idea behind the method has the same goal as with the sovereign's power by maintaining peace and order in society, but now with a different method where one must reduce deviations, produce good, obedient, productive, and docile citizens through surveillance technologies aimed at disciplining the body through normalization and examination. We are in the field of vision, internalizing the ruling relationship and happily disciplining ourselves through the micro-physics of power.

When looking at society this way, how the schools we go to, the military, the hospital, the media that help define what a beautiful body is, the NGOs that define what poor women in the global south are like (expectations given by people in power), then it becomes clear that we live in a panopticon in a panopticon. We are actually under surveillance by ourselves. What matters to us can be said to be the historically conditioned dominant discourses in society that are internalized in us through forms of power.

### **2.6.3. Biopower and biopolitics**

This power has neither land nor wealth as its supreme goals, like the sovereign, nor bodies, and individualization, like the power of discipline. However, this form targets populations through control and security, where the object is the element of life (Eliassen, 2016, p.140). It is a transformation from micropower to macro power, and one gets an element of politics and governance. Foucault also explains that the biological is brought into politics for the first time now (Eliassen, 2016, p.141). Biopolitics that emerged in the eighteenth century was to take care of problems within the population which revolves around a set of livings that shape the population. This includes hygiene, birth and death rates, wealth, race, and life expectancy (Dean, 2010, pp. 118-119). In contrast to, for example, the sovereign's power, which is restrictive and takes life, biopower is productive as it produces life.

Foucault defined biopower as:

“The set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power, or, in other words, how, starting from the eighteenth century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species” (Foucault, 2009, p.1).

Biopolitics is described by Eliassen (2016, p.141) as a social prophylaxis that aims to prevent harm that affects the vital, happy, and economic resource that the population constitutes. Biopolitics is, therefore, a kind of risk management that tends to the population.

To do this, several administrative techniques are needed. These techniques can be explained as statistics, producing new knowledge about life expectancy, death rate, health, and more. Life is transformed into research, knowledge, and a new form of manipulation (Eliassen, 2016, p.142). Statistics and research on a population in a given place will be able to provide information about, for example, diseases or epidemics, which in turn leads to numbers that give room to implement measures in this area to improve the population's health so that they become healthy and economically productive again. This means that people become subjects of the state's sovereign power to administer life. This is relevant concerning the NGOs' knowledge production, where they monitor the interventions and report to, for example, actors who finance the NGOs. This form of power comes into view in the analysis of actors.



This form of power exists today. Take hospitals, for example, that produce knowledge about what is a normal body or a sick body and take care of our health. Dean (2010, p.119) explains that this power extends beyond just being able to regulate health and illness. It goes down to the family level concerning housing, lifestyle, economic growth, and migration. Thus, biopolitics also affects social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors.

As discipline explained, this produces knowledge about the individual in order to be able to discipline and normalize. This formation produced can contribute to biopower as well. The problem that can arise from such a form of power and politics is race and class division. It can provide a basis for racism, state racism, and eugenics. It can also impact how the NGOs classify and divide poor women in the global south. Since biopower refers to power, this power is a way of being able to govern. Biopower governs based on knowledge of life, which can be identified and regulated. One gets data or knowledge from hospitals, i.e., massive amounts of information about birth and death rates and defining what is sick and healthy. One qualifies, measures, values, and hierarchies (Eliassen, 2016, p.145). In other words, who is sick and healthy, or normal and abnormal. All this information should form a basis for intervening, and normality becomes a tool for management.

An example of how biopower has intervened in mental health is homosexuality. From ancient times, homosexuality was not seen as something abnormal, but in a period when medical science flourished and scientists combined sexuality with reproductivity, homosexuality was made something abnormal. Homosexuals were put in psychiatric institutions to make them normal again. Today, homosexuality is seen differently and does not connect affection with the reproductive.

Suppose one looks at discipline and biopower together. In that case, one gets the terms "norm" and "normality," which provide the basis for a power that rules through technology, normalization, and control, which is not only controlled by the state, but which plays out at many levels in society (Eliassen, 2016, p.146).

## **2.7. Governmentality**

As described in the preceding sub-chapters, there is a genealogy of power where one goes from violence and ideology to discipline, learning, and education that shapes the reflexes of the

individual's body. In the last sub-chapter, one moves away from wealth, land, and body as objects to the biopolitical power that has the population as the object. This genealogy of power shows that it is not only the state that holds power, but it also appears in knowledge and relationships between people.

Bringing together these three forms of power, it forms the microphysics of power (Eliassen, 2016) or what we can call "governmentality." Power is, therefore, not reserved for the king or the state. It is not a substance but a relationship between individuals exercised in different practices. This does not mean that disciplining or biopolitics has replaced sovereign power, but in an analysis of power, one can find traces of all three types. Not always at the same time, but they exist as a precondition of the other. This shows that power is multifaceted, as power does not just come from "the top" and is a relationship between an oppressor and an oppressed (Eliassen, 2016, pp. 132-133). This brings us to counterforce. If there is power, there must be counterpower or resistance, and it is present everywhere in the network of power (Eliassen, 2016, p.136).

Together, this makes power very diffuse, and, according to Dean (2010, p.32-33), it requires asking "how" questions. Explained in more detail how we govern and are governed within different regimes and under what conditions the regime arose (Dean, 2010, pp. 32-33).

As described in the preceding sub-chapters, a genealogy of power here is where one goes from violence and ideology to discipline, learning, and upbringing, which shapes the reflexes of the individual's body. In the last sub-chapter, one moves away from wealth, land, and body as objects to the biopolitical power that has the whole population as an object. This genealogy of power shows that it is not only the state that holds power but also acts in knowledge and relationships between people. These three forms of power form the microphysics of power (Eliassen, 2016), or what we can call "governmentality." Power is, therefore, not reserved for the king or the state. It is not a substance but a relationship between individuals exercised in different practices. This does not mean that disciplining or biopolitics has replaced sovereign power, but one can find traces of all types in analyzing power. They are not always simultaneous, but they exist as a prerequisite for the other. This shows that power is multifaceted, as power does not just arrive from "the top" and is a relationship between an oppressor and an oppressed (Eliassen, 2016, pp. 132-133). This brings us to counterforce. If

there is power, there must also be counterpower or resistance, and it is everywhere present in the network of power (Eliassen, 2016, p.136).

Together, this makes power very diffuse, and according to Dean (2010, p.32-33), it requires asking "how" questions. Explained in more detail; how we govern and are governed within different regimes and under what conditions the regime arose (Dean, 2010, pp.32-33).

### 3. Methodology

This chapter presents theories associated with the analysis and discussion of the research. The theory is explained first, and the analysis comes as an extension of this. This research is qualitative as the focus is on opinion formation, aiming to uncover the phenomena's characteristics (Christoffersen, Johannessen & Tufte, 2016, p. 28). This research is based on primary data such as documents and interviews. Based on what I am investigating and what I want answers to, I will have to adapt the methodology according to needs and objectives. It is difficult to use a method without adapting it to the needs, as social conditions are complex, so the method must be adapted accordingly. This means that it is essential that the entire methodological process and analysis are as transparent as possible so that it can be checked and what I have done stands clear.

The general approach would be that I:

1. Find out how the NGOs frame poor women in the global south.
2. Investigate how this framing shapes (or reflects) development practice.
3. By hooking the practices linked to the framing of women, I will use theories, as shown in the literature review, to say something about the effect this has on women.

Five Norwegian NGOs will be investigated through interviews and recent documents that the NGOs have produced and distributed publicly. Below I list the NGOs that participated in the research and give a simple description of them, as the foundations of the NGOs may be interesting to investigate how they portray poor women in the global south.

NGO 1 is a Christian-based Norwegian NGO that is well known in Norway. The Christian foundation is not reflected in the name or a main feature of the NGO and its work, but in strategic plans, one can read that Jesus is a role model for their work.

NGO 2 is also religious and Christian. These have religious designations in their name, which means that when one reads the name, one knows it is religious and, more specifically, a Christian NGO. There is no doubt that this is a Christian organization when reading the strategic plan and other documents. This is reflected in some development programs as well.

NGO 3 is an organization where social movements have stood firm and are a part of the foundation for the NGO. Especially the trade union movement in Norway, a party-politically independent organization but not politically neutral. The organization has projects both in Norway as well as in the Global South. The trade union movement and solidarity are still important issues of struggle for the organization.

NGO 4 is also an organization with roots in social movements. This NGO is an umbrella organization with 48 member organizations as of 1/11/2021 and focuses exclusively on women and works to strengthen women's social, economic, and political development.

NGO 5 is an international organization with offices in Norway explicitly targeting children. This organization differs slightly from the others because it focuses on a specific age group and is an international organization. It may be interesting to see if this NGO portrays women in the global south differently than the Norwegian-founded NGOs.

### **3.1. Qualitative research design**

Put simply, qualitative research explains why something happens and not and is concerned with trying to understand how people perceive the world and social patterns in a limited area (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.95). This is the case in this research as well, as the research will try to uncover how the NGOs understand poverty related to women in the global south. This leads the research to a qualitative approach to the research.

I have chosen a qualitative method in this research, where I gather information from documents and interviewees that will able me to gain insight into the perspectives of the NGOs' interviewees. I have no specific hypothesis, and the research appears open-ended. The focus is on text, in contrast to quantitative methods, which focus more on numbers (Bryman, 2012, p. 380). A case design is chosen, and I carefully research a few cases. As Johannessen et al. (2016, p.80) describe, a case study's characteristic is that the study is limited to one or a few cases and is as detailed as possible around the chosen cases, where one often uses several different data sources. They also describe that the case should be studied in a specific setting, which is the case with this research, where I study how five Norwegian NGOs construct poor women in the global south through interviews and documents published by the NGOs. I have no hypothesis to start from. In other words, I do not start the research with a defined hypothesis or problem.

The research should not result in confirming or denying a hypothesis or a phenomenon. It should be open-ended, and I will discuss the findings using theory.

In this research and using case design, it is challenging to research a conclusion that can be generalized or applied to all NGOs. There are several reasons for this, but the sample size is one factor. The scope of the research will set limits on how large the sample size can be, but it should be large enough to illuminate the problem. The size will depend on the collected data quality (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.114). Another factor is that the research locks in time at a given point, and the language and dictions are constantly in motion, so the results can only say a little about the future.

Early in the research process, I chose theories, as shown in the literature review, which will help give meaning to the empirical findings. This is used so the empirical findings can be anchored to and say something about the finding. With theory, it will be easier to make empirical work make sense and be anything other than a simple description (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.47). Using theory is for me to have some tools to interpret the findings, and the result of the research is unknown until the analysis is carried out. My research, I would argue, is both deductive and inductive. since I do not proceed from any clear hypothesis but use selected theory so that this will somewhat influence me in advance

### **3.2. Poststructuralism**

My position is within a post-structural epistemological perspective. Poststructuralism is a theory or a collection of converging themes that emphasize that there is no "truth" (Appelrouth & Edles, 2016, p.642). If there is no absolute truth, there is no absolute "reality" either. This means that "reality is diverse and complex since it is socially constructed (Appelrouth & Edles, 2016, p.642). It is the language that is important here. For example, we construct ourselves with language. Poststructuralism is not concerned with the individual himself but with how language helps construct identities and social relations (Skrede, 2017, p. 75). It is important to note that poststructuralism believes that there are no structures in language that give words their meaning and that it is constantly changing (Skrede, 2017, p. 75). Thus, one cannot lock opinions, which means that this research can only say something temporarily about the result of the analysis, as the language changes over time, according to the interest of the NGOs. This research analyzes how the NGOs create their perception of poor women or what they see as reality. Such a

position means that my analysis cannot conclude with a result but rather research universal and normative conclusions and reflections.

This is a better starting point than positivism which tests theories and aims to develop social laws (Bryman, 2012, pp. 27-28). As mentioned above, poststructuralism believes that there are no structures in language that give the word meaning and are constantly changing. Then it will be impossible to develop any kind of social laws. Humans have feelings and can react in affect, which again confirms the problem with positivism.

Opposition to positivism is interpretivism. This theory attempts to understand groups of people and communities based on several philosophical frameworks where one tries to understand humans act, as the meaning of acting lies in action itself (Bryman, 2012, pp.28-29). In this research, I will research how the discourses are produced and represented; therefore, I have chosen a post-structuralist point of view, which would have been difficult to do from an interpretive point of view, as it focuses on problematization and ways of understanding the problem itself.

### **3.3. Data collection methods**

In this research, I have chosen documents and transcribed semi-structured interviews as data. Therefore, data collection methods are different and adapted to the type of data I will collect. The collection took place from December 2021 to the end of February 2022.

In order to get hold of the interviewees, I contacted the relevant NGOs via e-mail to the various headquarters, trying to get hold of people who could participate in this research. I went wide and hoped this would lead to a "snowball effect" (Bryman, 2012, p.202). I received no answers to my inquiries and then tried to contact the NGOs via e-mail again, but this time I highlighted that the NGO's name and the names of the interviewees should be anonymized. This led to responses from all the NGOs. All the NGOs provided a person I could contact. I wanted to get hold of several people in each organization with the "snowball" method, which I managed with two NGOs. In the remaining three, the NGOs believed only one person could participate in this research. This resulted in interviewing seven people, of which two were in two NGOs and one in the remaining three. This ended with maintaining enough data, as the interviews were rich in content, and some could be completed with follow-up questions afterward.

The documents used are documents from the relevant NGOs' self-produced public documents such as strategic plans, masterplans, and documents describing the NGOs' projects in the global south. I collected documents from the NGOs and was careful to use documents in the public domain. These were principal programs, documents with target achievement, and other relevant documents describing their projects concerning poor women in the global south. Finding the right and most appropriate documents can be a challenge.

Bryman (2012, p.544) has listed four criteria that I followed to point out quality-rich documents. These criteria are aimed at; authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning, and I assessed the documents with the criteria as a guideline, as these may seem quite strict. Although these are strict rules, they work well in the sampling process, as there were, for example, some documents produced by hired journalists or articles that were outsourced to external companies/journalists. Using documents that the NGOs themselves have produced is vital because, as Bryman (2012, p.551) describes, those who write the content have a specific view of the matter. It is the NGOs' perspectives that I want to explore. It is okay to use outsourced documents because when the article is left to others, there is still a specific content order. As Bryman (2012, p.554) points out, it is more complex that there is an underlying social reality to extract from the documents. As mentioned, the documents can be written in favor of the author, where the author greatly influences what is written.

### **3.3.1. Individual semi structured interviews**

The method of the interview in this research is semi-structured interviews. The interviews are an excellent way to have two-way communication where I can ask questions about topics related to this research, and which allows me to follow up on answers and comments so that I get a broader understanding of the topics raised in the interviews (Christoffersen et al., 2016, pp. 145-146).

Before the interviews, an informed consent document was prepared, approved by the supervisor for this research, and signed by the participants. This kind of consent is essential, as the Personal Data Act requires consent (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.91). I prepared an interview guide that defined the topics I was to use in the interviews (See Appendix A). This interview guide is relatively general, and the same guide was used for all interviews. I wanted to avoid defining



specific questions so that the interview guide deals with general topics so that I would not be able to control the questions so that the answers were, in a way, predefined and directed towards the thematic analysis. If I had done that, I would claim that it would steer the research in a specific direction (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.149). Having a relatively open interview guide means that the interview "flows" nicely. The interviewees can talk freely about the topics and steer the conversation toward what they value, and think is essential. In this way, I can more easily get hold of aspects that the interviewees and the NGO prioritize and believe are essential concerning poverty and development. It also allowed me to come up with important follow-up questions concerning the specific NGOs.

All communication between the interviewees and me was carried out via email, where I was careful to encrypt the text so that the content could not make sense to someone on the outside. Emails were deleted as soon they were answered, which must be done to ensure anonymity (Christoffersen et al., 2016, p.149). Due to the Covid pandemic, it was agreed that the interviews would be conducted via Zoom. One of the interviews was conducted by telephone. All interviews were recorded with an approved recorder on loan from the University of Agder. The interviews were recorded without the recorder having internet access. Immediately after the interview was completed, I transferred the recordings to a secure page on the university's approved storage cloud. The file on the recorder is then deleted. There was no need for notes, as the interview captured the material I wanted. Each interview lasted approx. 60-80 minutes. The transcription was on the university's approved storage cloud site and was anonymized with pseudonyms.

The transcription was a good exercise, which allowed me to gain even greater familiarity and knowledge of the collected data. The interviews have been analyzed with thematic analysis, and the findings are presented in chapter 4. This analysis attempts to develop answers to the research questions RQ1., RQ1.1., and RQ1.2.

### **3.3.2. Documents**

I collected documents from the NGOs and was careful to use documents in the public domain. These were principal programs, documents with target achievement, and other relevant documents describing their projects concerning poor women in the global south of recent years.

The documents are the starting point for the critical discourse analysis, where the findings are presented and discussed in chapter 4.6.2. This analysis aims to provide answers to research question RQ2. The thematic analysis and the interviews will also form a context for the analysis, and the combination helps to complement the discourse analysis. Therefore, such a combination is a valuable way to find answers to the research questions.

### **3.4. Data analysis and writing**

Since I am Norwegian and the interview subjects were Norwegian, the interviews were transcribed and kept in Norwegian. Extractions of essential themes and sentences in this research have been translated into English. The documents I have used are also in Norwegian, as the organizations are located in Norway.

When I had to choose a method, it was based on what would suit the research best. It has been an instructive but demanding process, as the analysis requires me to go back and forth repeatedly in the texts and notes in order to be able to interpret the collected amount of data, where small and large fragments are connected to make sense. When I started writing the chapter on findings, I had to go back to the analysis several times. Writing the findings constantly gave me new insight that developed the analysis, where new patterns emerged more clearly. It also affected the theory choice in the literature review as the analysis was conducted. I had to add more theory to be able to say something about the findings.

Methods used in this research are adapted to the problem statement and the research questions in order to be able to get answers to the research questions in the best possible way. Therefore, I have chosen to combine two methods. The analysis method chosen first is a thematic analysis, which I used to map the discourse of poor women in the global south and to look at how the NGOs focus on a particular development intervention using data from the interviews. I have connected these themes to theories to understand more about them and to be able to say something about them. The findings of the thematic analysis are to be found in chapter 4. After this, I will conduct a critical discourse analysis of the collected documents to see how the texts construct different objects and actors in different ways, making discourse analysis a good tool for thinking critically about development interventions and demonstrating discursive power patterns. All transcripts and documents were anonymized and printed out on paper during the analysis.

### **3.4.1. Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is an excellent method since the qualitative methodology is complex. Braun & Clarke (2006) believe that thematic analysis is a fundamental method or a tool that can be used across qualitative methods. I have chosen this tool to analyze the interviews, as it is a flexible tool that can identify, analyze, and depict the themes in my data material. Thematic analysis is also not bound to a specific theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.5), and therefore it can be used within the framework of different theoretical and epistemological traditions.

Since the method is not linked to a specific framework, it is vital to be clear about the process in the analysis for this method (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.7). I make this visible in the subsection below, where I explain the chosen process. Braun & Clarke (2006, p.10) define a theme as capturing something important. Important concerning the research questions. Themes are not predefined, and it is myself that decide what an important theme is in this research, but I must be consistent in this selection (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.11).

I have chosen in this analysis to create a rich thematic description of the entire interviews to see the most important themes. This requires that I accurately reflect the entire interview in the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.11). This comes at the expense of depth and complexity. Braun & Clarke (2006, p.13) describe two levels to analyze: a semantic level and a latent level. I have chosen primarily to analyze on a semantic level, where I find what they call the surface meaning of the data. However, after the themes have been mapped, I want to develop this further, showing connections and interpreting where I conclude with a broader meaning of the findings.

### **3.4.2. How thematic analysis is carried out**

After the interviews were transcribed, I began the analysis process. No software of any kind was used in the analysis, and only printing of the transcriptions, pen, marker, scissors, and glue was used throughout the process. It should also be mentioned that this was not a straightforward step-by-step process. I had to go back and forth in the text and read and analyze several times as the analysis unfolded. The data was analyzed to follow Braun & Clarke's (2006, p.15-22) step-by-step guidelines.

Step 1 is familiarizing with the data. I interpret this as close reading. Then I read through the entire document to gain an understanding and overview of the content. When I read, it is with the ulterior motive that I am looking for something. Then I automatically start looking for opinions and patterns. At the same time, when some of the text stood out in some directions, I began to mark the text with markers and notes. This meant that I began to understand the content of the text better, and it became easier to go back and forth in it.

Step 2 is to find the initial codes. I started this process first when I was familiar with the text. Here, parts of the text that arouse my interest and give me ideas about what the extracts contain were coded. I also started writing down the codes on a separate paper sheet to find them again in the text. In a way, this becomes a small card index with small groupings of texts. During the analysis, there were many codes, as I was still determining what to code. I coded everything that seemed important, formed patterns, and everything that repeated itself throughout the texts. I continued marking out text phrases with a marker pen. I wanted to include larger parts of the text to retain the understanding of the context of the text.

Step 3 is where I search for themes. I started mapping my codes, along with a continued close reading of the text. Here I continued to go back and forth in the text. When the codes were mapped, I began to cut out the excerpts from the text and pasted them on separate paper sheets, where I could collect and merge codes into separate themes as I found connections between the codes that eventually formed different themes and subthemes.

Step 4, reviewing themes. Once the themes were established, it was time to analyze them. Even at this stage, I had to go back into the text to move codes and restructure themes. The themes that remained were themes that I could find enough text to ascertain or document that this was solid themes. Not only to confirm the theme, but also to confirm the connections between themes and the codes that made up the theme. As the analysis unfolded, several codes and themes were discarded or linked to other themes.

Step 5 is to define and name the themes. This was done when the thematic map, which was created by cutting and gluing themes, was completed. Here, I tried to say something about the themes and what the themes tell me. I went through the whole text again to double-check that the themes were connected to the text's breadth and see how they connected to the research

questions. This leads the analysis to step 6, which is writing the report. This is written in chapter 4.6.2., where I present the discourses and elaborate on those.

### **3.4.3. Critical discourse analysis**

The discourse analysis will contribute to thinking critically about development and development interventions by demonstrating discursive power structures. Analyzing the documents with discourse analysis, I believe, has its "importance" in the meaning that documents could never be fixed but instead situated. This means that documents and their text are created in a given social context, and their meaning is acquired when used in practice, and its meaning can change, depending on the context or context it is part of. Therefore, documents are not passive material. The term discourse can be a complicated concept, but a good description of discourse is given by Foucault in Fairclough as follows:

"I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements."

(Foucault 1984 in Fairclough 2003, p.123)

In this research, such a description of discourse can refer to specific cases and to metaphorical references linked to a basic value and context. In this way, discourse is a way of linking the relationship between utterances and context together. Fairclough (2003, p.124) elaborates on Foucault's definition and sees it as a way of representing the world, as there can be many ways of presenting the world, depending on the position one has, their identities, and social relations. These ways of presenting the world, or the discourses, can compete for hegemony, dominate, or complement each other (Fairclough, 2003, p.124).

I will try to discover the production of aspects of the world with discourse analysis in this research. I will examine the selection of NGOs and how they represent development and poverty regarding women in the global south. These discourses influence how much the population in Norway views women's poverty.

Fairclough (2003, p.126–127) explains how new discourses emerge by combining existing discourses in different ways. This applies to this research where there may be derived

established discourses from the text, which contribute to the formation of the discourse about poor women in the global south. At the same time, I want to be observant that some aspects of the way of seeing the world, or social practices, that are written in a text and form a discourse can carry the same meaning but are named or expressed differently.

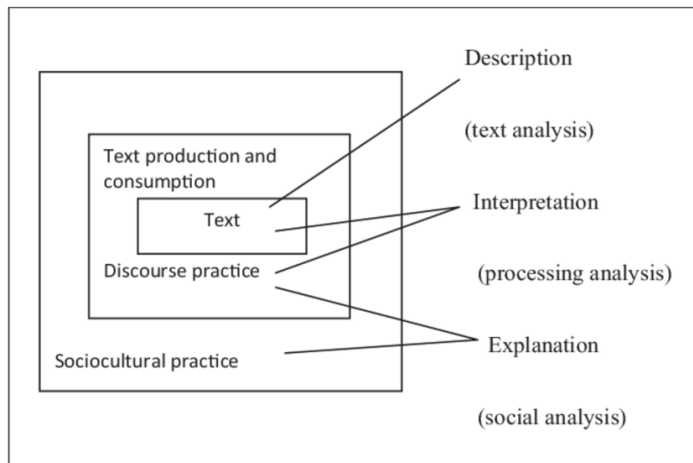
#### **3.4.4. How critical analysis is carried out**

In this research, I will draw on different theories of discourse analysis. This is to adjust methods to fit my research and research questions, but I can mention that the method is mainly taken from Fairclough's (2003, p.129) way of identifying discourses, and I use this as a base and guideline. The concept of discourse analysis examines the creation of meaning beyond the sentence level and thereby attempts to describe how language, text, and context mutually influence each other. According to Fairclough, meaning creation is a constructive action. Through textual practices such as the production and interpretation of texts, social relations and different systems of knowledge and ways of thinking are constructed. The themes analyzed in chapter 4 and the interviews will also be used as context for the discourse analysis. In preparing the discourse analysis, I proceeded through the text carefully and linked the themes in chapter 4 to the discourses I found, where possible.

As done with the thematic analysis, I used pen, paper, scissors, and glue to map the discourse and did not use any software. This is a method that works well, which means that I have a good overview and control of the material. As Bryman (2012, p.528) describes discourse analysis, there are several ways to do this. There is no absolute method for this. It is more complex than inserting simple words or sentences into a discourse. One must look for the unsaid and looking for what is hidden "between the lines". This is carried out with close reading and systematic mapping. I have done this by using Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Table 1), where I analyzed the text and then interpret it based on the situation and the textual context.

Sociocultural practice, or social structures, is something I use to describe power relations in society (Skrede, 2018, pp. 32-33). This could be, for example, economic structures such as capitalism and neoliberalism, which is a central theme in the analysis. By using the model in an analysis, connections between the levels can be demonstrated:

**Figure 1**



Fairclough model for discourse analysis (Hågvar, 2011, p.35)

Christoffersen et al. (2016, p.227) say that the way you speak shapes society, and you always draw on established discourses, which is the core of this analysis, to extract the established discourses that language draws on. Overall, in order to be able to penetrate discourses, I will first carry out a close reading of the documents at the structure, sentence, and word level and then interpret this in the light of the situational context and the textual context, where the aim is to be able to understand the associated social function it has, and which genres, norms, and rules it relates to.

I depend on having cultural competence in the area to be analyzed, something I have acquired. My cultural competence helps me understand the context better, but also includes the fact that I am influenced by my own understanding, which can affect the analysis in such a way that certain things in the text are taken for granted. Throughout my education, I have been presented with many subjects and themes that I have studied. This affects the analysis, and I have previously formed opinions about the subject and the subject matter that this research covers. This means, when I construct the discourse based on the analysis, this is based on what I see in the analysis. Others would be able to see things in other ways.

I began the analysis process by closely reading the texts, where I try to identify representations in the text. A representation is simply explained realities, and discourses are reality-producing. Hence one can translate representations into realities (Neumann, 2021, p.57). I marked out representations that I found relevant, then note the representations in them with keywords and

the context they are in. I do not start with predefined categories, as I cannot force the representations or statements into a category.

I went through the documents several times and marked all the statements. At some point, I had to stop going through my markings and notes because the more I read, the more I found, and eventually, I have to move on in the process. As I studied the notes and markup, I identified different categories and recurring words and keywords. I started to sift these out, then build on those findings, cut them out, and systematize them in groupings on different paper sheets. In the context of the statements, many other themes appeared linked to context, which I cut out and pasted into a column next to it. Then I studied the language carefully to find the connections, repetitive words, and semantics.

Once I had divided these into categories that arose, I started working with each statement, where I shortened them by removing redundant words and everything that had nothing to do with the message in the text. Once the statements were stripped down to their core content or message, I made simple descriptions next to each statement that said something about the statement and its context. I then demonstrated similarities and differences between the representations to defend that they are connected. This led to much cutting and pasting, and after many days of meticulous analysis, I got an overview of the representations and could point out four discourses. I also discovered that the discourses overlapped quite a bit, and it was not easy to find out where the distinction should go between some of them.

These discourses help answer RQ2, and the impact they may have is discussed in chapter 4.6.2.

### **3.4.5. Thematic analysis of actors**

A key point in forming an overall picture of how the NGOs frame poor women in the global south is to investigate whether other actors impact the NGOs' developmental work. To find an answer, I performed a thematic analysis of all the data sets I had, both the interviews and the documents collected.

The method used is a thematic analysis that I adapted to fit the purpose. This is the same method as mentioned earlier in the chapter, but I simplified this somewhat this time, as I do not need to go so deeply into the text to find the actors involved. Finding the actors is relatively easy but requires me to obtain them coherently, equally, and consistently throughout the process.



Therefore, I chose to simplify a thematic analysis. The actors are easy to recognize and are located on the surface of the text. I start the analysis by printing out new copies of all the data, then begin to read closely and highlight all phrases that contain words that identify other organizations and people as actors. It must be said that actors are not simply listed in the data, so I must be careful and consistent in the procedure.

When everything was marked, I cut these sentences out from the printings. I cut out such large extracts that I got the context and wrote comments with a pen where I needed additional information to understand the context. Then I started to sort these where similar organizations and findings were gathered in clusters. Next, I started crossing out the excess text with a pen.

I organized the clippings into clusters and pasted them onto a poster large enough to have vertical columns next to it. In the next column, I entered notes that tell something about the actor's role. I made two columns next to these. one where I wrote down whether the actor had any connection and which connection it had with other actors, after which the next column tried to find boundaries between the actors.

Furthermore, I spent time analyzing these relationships, noted additional information about this, and then brought together actors with something in common. I completed by sorting and writing something that tells how often they are mentioned in the text and assumptions about how much influence they have on the NGOs. Then I wrapped up and wrote a report of the findings, which I discuss in the findings of actors in chapter XXX

### **3.5. Pitfalls and limitations**

Regarding the analysis and methods chosen, one could make the mistake of not having analyzed anything at all, for example, by simply copying representations and themes, leaving out analytical narratives. One can analyze representations and themes that do not work, are unrelated to the research questions or are supported by data. One can fall into the trap of needing to be more consistent throughout the analysis and lacking coherence and transparency.

During interviews, I, who carry out the interview questions, can influence the interviewee so that my behavior influences them. Emotions can occur in an interview where, for example, empathy is conveyed. In the documents, it is essential to be careful with the selection so that

one only analyzes an author's opinions where the author does not belong to the NGO being researched. Then one will analyze a reality that can be valid. At the same time, it is crucial to recognize that one's work and behavior often is influenced by several factors. Forms of social, economic, and political conditions often influence one, affecting your values, which are almost impossible to disconnect from.

### **3.6. Ethical considerations**

A fundamental perspective that applies to all types of research and academic papers is the technical-ethical that applies to plagiarism and poor use of references. To avoid plagiarism, I have focused on referencing and double-checking the use of references throughout the research.

When collecting documents via the internet, I was careful and checked that the documents did not encounter problems with personal protection or violate Norwegian laws. I must avoid harm, and, in this project, physical harm could be that I spread and infect people with Covid-19. Otherwise, there is a chance of pre-existing stress. The primary measure was to structure the interview and the presentation with privacy legislation and ethics. It is also essential in this case that the interviewee participates entirely voluntarily, which requires that I inform the interviewee with clear information about the research so that he or she understands what they are participating in. Regarding Covid-19, I conducted all the interviews via Zoom, so there was no risk of me spreading covid during the research. When dealing with people, and the fact that I am a human being, there is always room for misunderstandings. I was focusing on avoiding this by ensuring that everything I wrote and said, as far as possible, appeared understandable, simple, and transparent.

It is vital that the interviewees, or organizations, recognize the information in the project at the end and that it has been used correctly. Good communication was promoted so that the interviewee was made aware of all types of dangers or unfortunate situations, as it is my responsibility that the research is conducted safely and securely.

In this research, I need contact information to arrange interviews, provide information and conduct an informed consent. I minimized the risk by using only one contact method, e-mail. I scheduled face-to-face interviews and conducted interviews on Zoom using a digital recorder. I consider audio files as personal data. In order to be able to collect personal data, I followed

UIA's code of practice (UIA, 2021, 20. December), and the Norwegian center for research data (NSD, 2021, 20. December) regulations, where I applied for research and described the entire project. This was also done according to GDPR art. 5, requesting that personal data be processed lawfully (GDPR, 2021, 20. December). The NSD approved the project, and I have complied with all laws and principles.

I followed UIA's code of practice on consent, which requires that consent is given voluntarily, based on secure and adequate information, which covers personal data act 4 (UIA, 2021, 20. December). The participant could withdraw at any time, and consent is based only on this project (UIA, 2021, 20. December). I also included the participant's rights in the agreement (personal data act, 2018. Ch.3). When I collect and store personal data securely, I turn to the UIA (2021, 20. December) code of practice; 8, which incorporates the personal data act section 5. which says that data should only be stored for as long as I need it, and no longer.

## 4. Findings and analysis

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the thematic analysis from the interviews, where I map the discourse: poor women in the global south. I will go through the findings and find out what the NGOs think is the main reasons for poverty and how this reflects the interventions. I present the findings of the analysis by going through one NGO at a time, where the findings are divided into a presentation of findings and a subsection that deals with the strategies. Finally, I summarize and compare the main findings to examine similarities and differences. This is an interesting observation, as the selected NGOs have quite different profiles. The main findings will contribute to forming the basis for further discussion.

### 4.1. NGO1: Presentation of findings

There were no complete descriptions of what a poor woman in the global south is or consists of but mapping the themes from the interviews made it more visible who she is and what poverty is. This is an NGO with a religious connection to Christianity, and in the strategic plan, they state that NGO1's goal is to "contribute to lifting people out of poverty" and further that they have Jesus as a role model for this. This coincides well with the fact that they want to raise the quality of their strategies by following the SDG of "leave no one behind."

Through the mapping, I am left with five main themes that form the basis for how they frame poor women in the global south. These main themes are *lack of resources, uneducated, undeveloped mentality, of working age, and Rural*.

A minor extract of how these themes from the interview are linked to strategies and what they contain can be read in the table below (Figure 2).

**Figure 2 - Themes and extracts from interview**

NGO 1	
<b>Limited resources</b>	<p>«Access in relation to work when it comes to capital to develop»</p> <p>" Be able to start and develop income-generating activities"</p> <p>"Women often do not have their own bank account"</p> <p>"Women do not own their own property"</p>

<p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"Access to, land to farm, and to take out loans and"</i></p> <p><i>«It is mainly because the lack of access to education, and access in relation to work”</i></p> <p><i>“be able to start and develop income-generating activities »</i></p> <p><i>"When women brings home an income, they get more influence because they are seen as bringing something actually in, so they contribute to the family»</i></p> <p><i>"Access to, for example, land for farming and taking out loans and such, so there is a kind of general basis then for the approach we have"</i></p> <p><i>"We focus on saving and loan groups, is the approach we have across organizations"</i></p> <p><i>“Training components what is called Financial literacy»</i></p> <p><i>"When women get an increased income, what they prioritize spending those funds on, it is their children and family"</i></p>
<p><b>Uneducated</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/approach</p>	<p><i>"Those who have an education, have a low level of education, and they end up in the economic activity they do, and it is often in the informal sector"</i></p> <p><i>"There is a very low level of literacy among women"</i></p> <p><i>«There is a need to read and write training»</i></p> <p><i>"Low level of education, often ends up in the informal sector, and they are the most vulnerable"</i></p> <p><i>"Education is very important, and the different effects that education has, is as we say, that you have fewer children, you'll get a job with a higher income"</i></p> <p><i>"There has not been enough focus on what they learn in school, so it is a challenge"</i></p> <p><i>"Then we also run what we call active literacy classes"</i></p> <p><i>“Saving and running small financial activities"</i></p> <p><i>"We do formal education, teacher education"</i></p> <p><i>«Where we have developed a so-called base-school, an accelerated training program”</i></p>
<p><b>Undeveloped mentality</b></p>	<p><i>«They lack democratic education and development»</i></p> <p><i>"Change the mentality and training around what she thinks, to try to plan with the limited resources they have how to get the most out of them"</i></p>

<p>How could it be solved/approach</p>	<p><i>"Have a better understanding of your own rights, and have access to your own income, and then be able to participate to have a voice in the local community"</i></p> <p><i>"Work with them, to get them to participate"</i></p> <p><i>"Life mastery training"</i></p> <p><i>«Be aware of her own rights and master of own body»</i></p> <p><i>"Change the mentality around what she thinks ahead"</i></p> <p><i>"Must be taught to cooperate"</i></p>
<p><b>Working age</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/approach</p>	<p><i>"There is a clear connection with the fact that if girls get an education, marriage is often postponed"</i></p> <p><i>"The various effects that education has, as we say, that if you have fewer children, you may get a job with a higher income"</i></p> <p><i>"That you have a basic education and that you also have the opportunity for income-generating work, the combinations there"</i></p> <p><i>"It's 13 to 19 years on the life skills program. when it comes to saving and loaning groups, it is basically adult women"</i></p>
<p><b>The rural and traditional woman</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/approach</p>	<p><i>«When it comes to poverty, it is concentrated in the countryside »</i></p> <p><i>"There is widespread poverty in the countryside"</i></p> <p><i>«We work mainly in rural areas»</i></p> <p><i>"We work mainly in rural areas, that's where poverty is concentrated"</i></p>

These themes are strongly intertwined, producing a holistic picture of women's poverty, but it can be somewhat difficult to distinguish them from each other at times.

Lack of resources as one of the main themes initially seemed somewhat diffuse as it was not clearly specified which resources were short of. Going through the documents looking for resources that were described as a lack of, or necessity, it became evident that this referred mainly to capital, education, jobs, and arable land. The women were often described as women who must sell their goods on the side of the road, and they had no land to grow food on, and if they had a job, it was in the informal sector. Every time access

to land is described, it is always with being able to grow food, but a safe place to live is not mentioned. This creates an image of poor women, as a woman living in traditional rural societies as peasants.

Uneducated is a different main theme, but as shown above, this is strongly intertwined with a lack of resources and other themes as well. I chose to put this as a separate theme, as it is aimed at a few different focus areas. Under this theme, it emerges that women are ignorant. NGO1 addresses ignorance in two different ways. The primary focus is economic ignorance, and the second is lower primary education. NGO1 frames women in a way that tells that in large parts of the global south, the women are illiterate or have a low literacy level. Therefore, primary education is also a priority. Based on the analysis, one sees the strong connection to economic activity in several stages, where one strives to combine primary education with education in relation to economic activity.

Another priority that falls under uneducated is the link to population theory. By educating women, marriage is postponed, and if young people do not get an education, the chance of being married off is high. Education for NGO1 is then linked to literacy, increased economic activity, and family planning.

The underdeveloped mentality has a background in that they are not aware of their rights and do not have the mentality to get themselves out of poverty or to be able to act at all. They are described as lacking the skills to decide for themselves, and such a mentality is described as something one needs to lift oneself out of poverty.

The women are of working age, i.e., poor women belong to a particular age group. Although NGO1 does not write or say that the women must be at a certain age, this is a result of their strategies where the programs are aimed at women who can participate in an income-generating activity. There is also a focus on young girls who are not yet of working age. In the case of young girls who are not of working age, the end goal is the same as for women of working age, where the emphasis is on women lifting themselves out of poverty by participating in economic activity. The elderly population is not mentioned at all. No programs or descriptions were discovered to secure the elderly or retired. This does not state that there are no programs for these, but they are not

prioritized, and they will not have the opportunity to participate in large parts of the development programs that I could find in the examined documents.

Women as traditional and rural were the most concise description of poor women in the global south. It is explicatively confirmed in the interviews that poor women live in rural areas. This can also be seen by linking the lack of resources to this theme, as the primary resource that women lack is land to cultivate. One gets the impression that there is no poverty in the cities, and that poverty is reserved for the rural, so that the development goal becomes to reach for the urbanity and the developed.

#### **4.1.1. Strategies**

These themes reflect the strategies and development projects in several ways, which are closely linked. The lack of resources, which consists of several conditions, results in access to credit. Access to credit will be the keyway to solve the conditions that fall under the lack of resources. This is offered by programs aimed at loan and savings groups and facilitating revenue-creating activity via financial training. This can be linked to the theme of the uneducated, where education is aimed at training to be able to create their own income and to be able to become an entrepreneur. There is also talk of "the right" knowledge, and what NGO1 believes is the proper knowledge is then reflected in its projects. It is often mentioned that it is not only the women who must be educated but also the teachers so that they can teach adequately with the right knowledge. Education programs primarily consist of literacy classes, which also combine with loan groups called financial literacy classes. Other courses are in organizational theory and training in loan and savings methods.

With an underdeveloped mentality, the NGO links the theme close to the woman being able to manage herself, her finances, and to stand up in the local community as an independent woman and get herself out of poverty. This must be solved by being trained in mastery of life and learning about her rights. This is also linked to financing and education, as the underdeveloped mentality was included in financial education. In this context, an underdeveloped mentality means not knowing how to generate income. All these programs take place in rural areas.



## 4.2. NGO2: Presentation of findings

This NGO has a direct religious orientation towards Christianity, which is also reflected in the organization's name. In the mapping of NGO2, I am left with five main themes for how they frame poor women in the global south. These main themes are dysfunctional culture and social norms, incapability, lack of education and skills, rural and working age.

A small extract of these main themes and their contents can be read in the table below (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 -Themes and extracts form interview**

<b>NGO 2</b>	
<p><b>Dysfunctional culture and social norms</b></p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>" It can be seen in Afghanistan, that if women had worked, Afghanistan would not have been such a poor country</i></p> <p><i>"They do not shower enough, and do not know how to take care of their own hygiene"</i></p> <p><i>"Where religion and traditions and culture are very interwoven and difficult to set apart"</i></p> <p><i>"We aim working to change the dominant social norms and working with religious leaders"</i></p> <p><i>"The man will always overrule what they or whatever contribution the women bring up"</i></p> <p><i>"NGO 2 will work to reframe religious narratives that harm and hold girls and women back from realizing their human rights"</i></p>
<p><b>Incapable</b></p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"They are powerless"</i></p> <p><i>"They are not confident"</i></p> <p><i>"We come to communities and women do not have any type of economic income"</i></p> <p><i>"We make her understand that she has the power to make decisions for her own life"</i></p> <p><i>"We empower them with the economic empowerment but also literacy skills, so that they can rely a bit on themselves"</i></p> <p><i>"Helping to empower marginalized people to lift themselves out of poverty"</i></p> <p><i>"A key priority for this strategic initiative is to scale our Micro Investment methodology, where smallholder farmers invest in innovative and</i></p>

	<p><i>sustainable agricultural methods to increase productivity"</i></p> <p><i>"The GPV program or gender-based violence program and gender justice"</i></p> <p><i>"We do have a program on its own, called Climate Smart Economic empowerment, it is mostly related to agriculture"</i></p>
<p><b>Uneducated</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"Women in the global South that are poor will need first and foremost, training in business skills"</i></p> <p><i>"When it comes to sexual and reproductive health, there is a lack of family planning, and there is a lack of sex education."</i></p> <p><i>"If they're going to start up their own businesses, but they will also need the startup capital or startup kits to be able to start these businesses"</i></p> <p><i>"If you give birth to fewer children, then the children you have will be more likely to go to school, and then they are more likely to get out of poverty."</i></p> <p><i>"When talking about education programs, its saying that when you educate a girl, you educate the whole village, or you educate the whole world"</i></p> <p><i>"Many women in the global South that are poor, will need first and foremost, training in business skills"</i></p> <p><i>"Building small start-up business, helps women out of poverty and makes the country more self-sufficient"</i></p> <p><i>"We also provide women with knowledge on, what we call village savings, and credit"</i></p> <p><i>" To prevent pregnancy, we work with family planning"</i></p> <p><i>"We worked on comprehensive sexuality education"</i></p> <p><i>"We have strategies and goals for reaching young people with family planning in the village"</i></p> <p><i>"There is also teacher education"</i></p> <p><i>"Train teachers in pedagogy, so that they are able to do sex education"</i></p> <p><i>"We have especially gone for family planning."</i></p>
<p><b>Rural</b></p>	<p><i>"Many countries today have strategies and goals for reaching young people with family planning, but when you go out to the village, there isn't any strategy"</i></p> <p><i>"Unfortunately, no, we are not good at towns. I wish we were there »"</i></p>

<b>Working age</b>	<i>"I work with women in childbearing age"</i>
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These themes are not so different from NGO1, and it is a matter of degree differences. It should be mentioned that sexuality and sex are something that repeats in most themes in the analysis of NGO2, and I chose not to have it as separate them but instead refer to this in the other topics. Dysfunctional culture and social norms are a topic that is often used as an argument for interventions. It is used to justify the constructions of women and for the strategies and is perceived as one of the most important causes of poverty. The dysfunctional culture's main reasons are generally described as men, tradition, and religion. Not just as the causes but as part of the main definition of the cultural issue. Since religion is a recurring point within a dysfunctional culture and social norms, one can ask whether NGO2 believes Christianity is the right religion to obtain a functional culture and the proper norms.

The poor women are incapable, which means she is powerless and needs guidance. Gender inequality is linked to this theme, where the man is in charge, and the women are unable to make choices on their behalf of themselves. Much of the reason for this is men's superior position in rural societies. The term incapable is aimed at those who do not have access to money or know how to obtain money so that they can lift themselves out of poverty.

Lack of education and skills is also a theme intertwined with other themes and is both a description of why women are poor and part of the solution to the problem. NGO2 describes that education is needed because women lack the proper knowledge. NGO2 focuses on education in entrepreneurship, but one sees a considerable focus on the lack of education in health, sexual health, and hygiene. Hygiene is frequently mentioned, and there needs to be more cleanliness concerning menstruation. As I study the health issue more closely, it becomes clear that child mortality and a high birth rate are linked to this focus, which in turn ends up in arguments that with education and skills, the number of births will be reduced, which will lead to women being able to work. This reflects an interest in family planning as a strategy for NGO2.

The poor women and the development programs are located in rural areas, with a few exceptions in semi-urban areas. They emphasize peasants and the cultivation of vegetables as the primary strategy. Another reason for the NGO to intervene in rural areas is because attitudes

to sexuality are different there, and family planning is not established in rural areas in the same way as in urban areas.

When it comes to age, the focus is on women of childbearing and working age, where one can work to postpone births so that they can participate in income-generating activities.

#### **4.2.1. Strategies**

These ways of describing women form the basis for the strategies and development programs. One of the strategies in which not so many poor women participate, but rather employees and participants in the organization of NGO2, is advocacy work. This is somewhat linked to teaching, where NGO2 works to improve dysfunctional cultures and social norms with influence work. They work against religious leaders and men to change this. As mentioned, religion is a recurring point within dysfunctional culture, and the correct knowledge and norms bear the mark of being founded on Christianity. I believe that influence work against religious leaders seems like they are "missionaries."

Women are incapable, so a dysfunctional culture has been allowed to exist. Through education and information, they can begin to make informed choices and lift themselves out of poverty. As with the other NGOs, she has to lift herself out of poverty, but she must first learn some life skills to stand up for herself in society. This can partially be solved with improved financial income, as the woman's contribution to the household in the form of income can lead to a reduction in gender-based violence and independence. Programs that aim to solve this are gender-based violence programs and economic empowerment through education and entrepreneurship through different microfinance projects.

Lack of education and skills is aimed at two main factors, one of which is within entrepreneurship and the other is within sexual health. The training NGO2 offers in entrepreneurship differ somewhat from other NGOs as they target women in rural areas that already have access to land and resources. The educational content is much about irrigation, growing vegetables, how to intensify agriculture, and entrepreneurship. There will be a large proportion of women who fall outside those programs, as they need access to such land. Not only poor urban women are excluded, but also rural women who do not have access to land. To

put this to the "fingertip," one can ask whether one then omits the poorest and contributes to the poorest becoming poorer.

When it comes to lack of knowledge and education in sexual health, this includes family planning and training in using contraception. NGO2 has developed a system to make sexual health education more effective. Sexual health is linked to both dysfunctional culture and entrepreneurship so that they can lift themselves out of poverty.

Based on, among other things, the points above, NGO2 has created various fields of education. NGO2 offers a program called comprehensive sexuality program aimed at young people. NGO2 also runs some hospitals in the global south, offering an alternative health service than the state can offer. There is also a program where health personnel is trained in life-saving measures at births. In addition, attitude-changing training is conducted among the health personnel regarding sexuality. There is also a training of teachers, who will teach young people about sex. In addition, teachers are taught what to say about sex, as a separate syllabus has been prepared for this by the NGO.

**4.3. NGO3: Presentation of findings**

Four main categories of themes were found. The localized themes are Lack of resources, unorganized, violent victims, and rural. NGO3 is the clearest organization describing poor women and how poverty should be resolved, making them stand out somewhat from the other NGOs. One of the differences in how they stand out from the other NGOs is the intense focus on overall structure as a cause of poverty. They do not only intervene locally but combine this with influence work nationally and internationally.

Below is an extract of the themes that shows their formation (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 -Themes and extracts form interview**

<p><b>Lack of resources</b></p>	<p><i>«Women lacks access to resources to cultivate the land»</i></p> <p><i>«Lacks access to services, houses and things like that»</i></p> <p><i>“lack of own land to cultivate”</i></p>
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<p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"It is completely structural that women are poorer and have less access to resources"</i></p> <p><i>"Huge challenge that resources are so unevenly distributed"</i></p> <p><i>" Poverty is not primarily about a lack of resources, but about how resources are controlled and distributed"</i></p> <p><i>"They lack land rights so they can secure themselves financially"</i></p> <p><i>"We have promoted the laws about women's access to resources to cultivate the land."</i></p> <p><i>"Direct support in agriculture, sustainable agriculture program"</i></p> <p><i>«Focuses on agriculture and leadership courses for women»</i></p> <p><i>"microfinance, entrepreneur and business training"</i></p>
<p><b>Unorganized</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>«Poor organization among women»</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of independent organizations"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of mobilizations around social change"</i></p> <p><i>"We know that women's participation in social movements plays a vital role in building power"</i></p> <p><i>"Having a strategy for strengthening organization for mobilization and political influence in society is one of the most important things you can do in the long run"</i></p> <p><i>"Influence the overall structures"</i></p> <p><i>«We work with farmers' organizations»</i></p> <p><i>«Worked a lot to strengthen female leaders internally in the women's organizations»</i></p> <p><i>"Then we support such a network of women human rights defenders"</i></p> <p><i>" Working with program for sustainable agriculture with the organization"</i></p>
<p><b>Victims of violence</b></p>	<p><i>"The women in the community were very active, but everyone in the management was men"</i></p> <p><i>"It is completely structural that women have less influence"</i></p> <p><i>"Discrimination is quite obvious "</i></p>

<p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>«Violence against women has escalated»</i></p> <p><i>«An extreme patriarchal structure in society»</i></p> <p><i>"Violence is often a manifestation of power and thoughts about power and what role one should have"</i></p> <p><i>"Violence against women is the most systematic and widespread human rights violation, which leads to limited participation of women"</i></p> <p><i>«Address the huge problem, violence against women»</i></p> <p><i>"Through training, women gained the confidence to create change"</i></p> <p><i>«Increased self-confidence in women can lead to change»</i></p> <p><i>"A number of emergency telephones have been created"</i></p> <p><i>"Strong participation and organization are important to change power relations"</i></p> <p><i>"Increased self-confidence in women can lead to change"</i></p>
<p><b>Rural</b></p>	<p><i>«This is a women's organization for indigenous women and peasant women»</i></p> <p><i>"Many of the poorest women are indigenous peoples and peasants"</i></p> <p><i>"We have probably had a stronger presence in such a countryside, because we often work with farmers' organizations"</i></p>

The first theme is the lack of resources. This is a recurring theme, but they describe this from a larger perspective where there is a skewed distribution between "the West and the rest," and the skewed distribution continues down to smaller levels and down to local communities and the individual. This is where their perspective is, aiming at the overall picture and influencing change instead of just focusing on small projects in small communities alone. Finding which resources, the woman needs through documents can be challenging. Access to arable land is visible at first glance, but other shortcomings are hardly visible due to the significant focus on uneven distribution in society both nationally and internationally.

However, after a long search, I found resources such as capital, market access, entrepreneurship education, and business training.

It is clear that this NGO has its focus on working to change the overall structures and that this is the key to ending poverty. Unorganized women appear to be an equally important theme and are closely linked to the theme above. The poor woman is disorganized. She is primarily alone and is not allowed to participate in organized activities in society and has no access to resources. Participating in organized activity in the local community and on to larger independent organizations is something that NGO3 more or less sets as a premise for getting out of poverty. This probably has something to do with the NGO's profile, which for many years has engaged in social movements in the form of worker unions, and it seems that the NGO's definition of organization in the context of poor women is directed in a political direction, and in the form of activism.

Violent victims are linked to dependence on the man. There is a bond of dependence between men and women, not only within the household but in the local community in general. This dependence is closely linked to the topic of violence. Men govern the local community that poor women live in, and they are at the mercy of what men decide. The women must accept what the men say and decide for the women and are not allowed to participate in local politics. This "addiction" is associated with a "detachment" that must occur for the woman to escape poverty because it prevents women from participating in society and reproduces patriarchal structures and dependence. This social inequality in the local communities between men and women also causes the economic difference. A structural chain of causes creates a downward spiral of poverty. If the women had more self-confidence, they would have been able to get out of poverty more efficiently, according to NGO3. With self-confidence, women found it easier to organize, resist the man, dare not be dependent, and could promote their voice politically in the local communities.

Again, the focus is on rural women, but with NGO3, one has a focus on the indigenous population, which is not seen with the other NGOs. The focus is so strong that they almost equate the rural with the indigenous population. It should be mentioned that NGO3 has few influence programs in slum towns such as South Africa, but it is confirmed that it is in the rural areas that they intervene, as this is where the poverty is. For example, South African programs



are aimed at political issues more than urban poverty. Altogether, NGO3 manifest women's poverty in an economy dominated by agriculture.

### **4.3.1. Strategies**

The lack of resources is consistent in all documents. The programs take place in parallel at the local level and a larger perspective, as they believe that the development must come from both "bottom-up" and "top-down" simultaneously. What resources in short, are mainly referred to access to land to cultivate, and the focus on advocacy makes up the largest parts of the strategies and disguises other factors. After much searching, I find programs such as microfinance, facilitating markets, and organizational training. It is obvious that the NGO wants to appear as an NGO that works to change the overall structural causes of poverty and has this as its main strategy. However, if one looks closely enough, one will find the other strategies as well. The way they frame poor women does not reflect development strategies such as microfinance and entrepreneurship. However, it is perhaps for other reasons, such as the connection to NORAD through funding. There is a gap between the framing and the strategy.

Unorganized women are linked to the NGO's profile of social movements, and social movements are a large part of NGO3's activities in Norway. This theme is also well connected with the theme above and relates to the NGO's goal of influencing change both from the grassroots in parallel with the larger overall structure at a political level.

Programs initiated by NGO3 are the "women can" program where they are trained to understand their rights, together with leadership. However, this is also linked to organizational management.

Violent victims are, as mentioned, connected to the fact that they are dependent on men, both within the household but also in the community. To be able to get out of poverty, one must become detached. Becoming detached can be solved with "women can" projects, as well as informing the women about their own rights and motivating them. Connected with violence victims is also an aspect of violence against women. There are simple measures for this, with crisis telephone and the organization of women's groups to prevent violence. Part of the solution to violence will also be to make women more independent with social movements and organizations. When NGO3 refers to areas and countries where they work with violence, they

refer to the woman in a way that makes them appear as if everyone is oppressed, and a dichotomy arises where all the men are oppressors.

The programs take place in rural areas and often target indigenous people. NGO3 includes a wider range of ages. Organizing women together in social movements includes the vast majority of women. All age groups are included, and one can benefit from the elderly and pensioners' long and vital knowledge in creating change. Disabled people and people with challenges can also participate here. However, this applies to the organizing of women in social movements, and when it comes to the other projects, NGO3 does not stand out, as one has to be of working age.

**4.4. NGO4: Presentation of findings**

When analyzing NGO4, I ended up with six main themes. These main themes consist of the following: *Do not have rights, lack self-determination, are uneducated and ignorant, lack skills, are rural and of working age.*

This NGO is an organization that only works against women. They also have a close collaboration with NORAD, where they are NORAD's advisers on issues concerning women. The question is whether the NGO that focuses on women stands out compared to the other NGOs that work with both genders.

Below, the main themes are shown with an extract of how these were formed (Figure 5).

**Figure 5 -Themes and extracts form interview**

<p><b>Lack of rights</b></p>	<p><i>"It is not men who should decide whether women should have the opportunity to decide over their own bodies or not"</i></p> <p><i>"Strengthening women's economic rights"</i></p> <p><i>"To create changes in Gender Equality legislation, so that conditions for women throughout the country improve"</i></p> <p><i>"Start by being able to have self-determination and your own right to make decisions, at least within economic rights, that you have that income yourself"</i></p>
<p><b>How could it be solved/Approach</b></p>	<p><i>"We work for women's economic rights, violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, rights and women, peace and security"</i></p>

	<p><i>"We have an organization that works with legal rights, so that they learn what kind of rights they have"</i></p>
<p><b>Lacks self-determination</b></p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"If you have to take a health check, then you have to ask your husband for money to take that health check"</i></p> <p><i>"That you have your own decision on what the money will be used for"</i></p> <p><i>"It isn't men who should decide whether women should have the opportunity to decide over their own bodies or not"</i></p> <p><i>"It is men who will have to sign documents for women to open a bank account or start their own business»"</i></p> <p><i>"If the woman earns the money herself, then the money will also embrace the children and the local community"</i></p> <p><i>"We have a network that works with sexual and reproductive health and rights"</i></p> <p><i>"Information about the importance of the fact that if more people are in work, then society will also have more jobs and a better economy"</i></p>
<p><b>Uneducated and ignorant</b></p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"Get better at making juice or realize that they can make juice from vegetable plants, that they can learn how to sell it, so that they can sell it on a market"</i></p> <p><i>"They don't know the advantage of women working"</i> <i>"They are not able to enter the market"</i></p> <p><i>" They need education on how to cultivate their land"</i></p> <p><i>"Simply to build knowledge and skills that one can manage one's own family"</i></p> <p><i>"Knowledge of rights and how they can build themselves up and what they are entitled to from the authorities to run a business"</i></p> <p><i>"We provide education for women"</i></p>

	«Knowledge-based sex education for all»
<p><b>Lack of skills</b></p> <p>Why?</p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p>"What we are trying to do is give women education, tools and opportunities to scale up"</p> <p>"Women need skills training"</p> <p>«Convey organizational building and that type of competence»</p> <p>"Without access to water, land and credit, there will be no world peace, because women think differently than men."</p> <p>"If the woman earns the money herself, then the money will also embrace the children and the local community"</p> <p>" If you give opportunities to women, it will also spread to the whole of society."</p> <p>"To teach them skills"</p> <p>"Helps agricultural women to form cooperatives so that they have access to larger markets"</p> <p>"Program collaboration to strengthen women's financial independence"</p> <p>«Microfinance groups»</p>
<p><b>Rural</b></p> <p><b>Working age</b></p>	<p>"The leader of one of the companies I was visiting said, 'we are not rural women any longer, we are businesswomen now.'</p> <p>"Where we have worked, has been mainly against the rural population, because that is where we have seen that the need has been greatest, and that poverty is also greatest"</p> <p>"Poor girls in rural areas are particularly vulnerable to child marriage"</p> <p>"Then there are women from 18 years and up"</p>

Lack of rights is the most used theme in the analysis of NGO4. The focus on rights is mostly directed toward economics and economic rights, with entrepreneurship as an end goal. This does not arrive directly from the text but with painstaking analysis. NGO4 links organization to achieve rights. At the same time, they direct organization towards economic activity as a driving factor. Lack of rights is also directed at sexual reproductive rights and LGBT rights.

Lack of self-determination can be linked to rights as well. NGO4 claims that poor woman does not have self-determination in many ways. Not only in isolated practical matters concerning household or financial matters but also in lacking self-determination over her own body. A description is created where the woman is dominated by the men in the societies in which they operate. The men decide over the woman's body and health. She lacks the right to decide what money is to be used for, the right to create one's own bank account and the right to educate oneself and participate in income-generating activities. The woman is portrayed more or less as bound by patriarchal structures and appears paralyzed.

The poor women are uneducated and ignorant, as described by the other NGOs. The reason why I have named the theme uneducated and ignorant is not that they mention the women as ignorant in a direct sense. However, in the portrayal, they are framed as a woman who lacks the basic knowledge to cope. This combined, they are framed as ignorant, at least since they are portrayed as women and cannot manage life without help from NGO4. The women need new knowledge to get themselves out of poverty. They are framed with traditional narratives where she is isolated from knowledge and development. The education she is isolated from is of a financial nature where knowledge of entrepreneurship and, more specifically, land cultivation is essential. Women's education is expected to have ripple effects on the whole of society, so investment in women will result in a win-win situation. The theme uneducated and ignorant, ranging from an economic side with entrepreneurship in focus to raising awareness of rights and life skills at the other end.

The next theme is an extension of the uneducated and is aimed at skills, where skills are regarded as a neoliberal way of thinking. It is a skill about competing in a market and becoming an entrepreneur, so she could lift herself out of poverty, as it positively affects the rest of the local community. Women lack entrepreneurial skills, and it is therefore, they have remained in poverty, and when they get the training in the correct type of skills, they will be able to lift everyone out of poverty as they become more aware of how to handle money despite being described as ignorant.

One cannot escape the poor woman being a rural woman. She is underdeveloped and traditional and must constantly work towards modernity and development. The focus on rural areas is obvious, and this has become a stereotypical and classic way of thinking about modern development that NGO4 sticks to. Working and childbearing age are recurring themes in this

research, and the elderly and pensioners were never mentioned. Adolescents and children are mentioned in some contexts concerning child marriage, with a linkage to overpopulation.

#### **4.4.1. Strategies**

Strategies for rights concern a gathering of women working to improve their rights. However, to do this, they must first be educated to become aware of their rights. NGO4 addresses the problem at the grassroots level while trying to do something about the problem top-down by protecting women's rights through political influence strategies. This is similar to what NGO3 does, and as NGO3 described, it is not helpful to just make changes from one angle. One must work from different angles and do something with the overall structures. Most programs are aimed at financial participation, and it is clear that it is financial participation that will ultimately get women out of poverty and contribute to women's rights because of the side effects women's income would create.

Self-determination is linked to rights. With better rights, they will have increased self-determination. And by self-determination, it is meant that the woman can decide over her own body, and then to avoid forced marriage, reduction of gender-based sexual violence, and also have economic freedom. The connection between self-determination and finances is connected in the sense that if the woman can earn money and decide over her own finances and dispose of the money herself, it will ultimately contribute to poverty reduction. This is justified by the fact that the woman disposes of money differently than the man does. She spends money on health, prioritizes the children, and this affects the whole family so that they can have the health to participate actively in school and income-generating activities. This, in turn, will benefit the entire local community by creating more jobs. Therefore, self-determination is as linked to a neoliberal mindset as rights are.

There are no separate development programs for increased self-determination. However, since the topic is so closely linked to other topics, it will be possible to achieve results in connection with other strategies and programs, both programs aimed at economic gain and programs dealing with rights.

Uneducated and ignorant are tightly linked to the themes above. In order to manage life, she needs to learn basic skills. As simple as knowing that she can sell the fruit she grows. Several

educational programs aim to train women in simple entrepreneurship to have the right tools to participate in the market. The focus is on the rural, and there is a lot of agricultural training program for women to learn to form cooperatives, which leads to gaining access to larger markets. The educational aspect is also two-fold, with the second aspect targeting sexual health. Guidance is offered in contraceptive use and in improving abortion facilities. This links education to population control.

Regarding skills, I find it only aimed at the economic part. Skills training is described as refining raw materials, running businesses, and creating value that will benefit the woman and her family. It is also described that a goal of becoming an entrepreneur or participating in trade is to participate in large trading markets eventually. One should go from selling goods from a "ditch edge" to participating in large urban markets.

I find little text that deals with other skills that facilitate women's everyday life. Something that might be needed, as the woman is described as the person in the household who bears the greatest burden.

The projects are carried out in rural areas, and the women are traditional and live in a backward society. Urbanity is compared to the large open market, which is a goal to take part in, so a dichotomy is formed between the traditional and the modern, where the traditional is associated with the rural and backward, and the urban as the developed modern society.

#### **4.5. NGO5: Presentation of findings**

Four main themes were derived for NGO5. As in the other NGOs, they are closely interlinked but nevertheless show different aspects of how the NGO frames poor women. NGO5's profile differs somewhat from the others as they are an organization aimed at children only.

The main themes that emerged from the analysis are exposed to forced marriage, Lack of knowledge and education, wrong attitudes, and rural.

Extracts of the findings are listed below (Figure 6).





	<p><i>"We are engaged in public education "</i></p> <p><i>«Works very much with teacher-education and further education of teachers»</i></p> <p><i>"Assist with teaching materials"</i></p>
<p><b>Wrong perspective</b></p> <p>How could it be solved/Approach</p>	<p><i>"It is the underlying causes, such discriminatory attitudes and norms in society that prevent the girl from getting an education or being married off."</i></p> <p><i>" Harmful customs, and within that there is both child marriage and female genital mutilation"</i></p> <p><i>"It is very important to work in local communities to change norms and attitudes that indicate that it is accepted to marry off girls"</i></p> <p><i>"Have a dialogue with local communities to try to change attitudes and norms"</i></p> <p><i>«Change norms and attitudes that indicate that it accepted to marry off girls at a very young age»</i></p> <p><i>"We are engaged in public education "</i></p>
<p><b>Rural</b></p>	<p><i>"Often you live very far from hospitals or health care, and you have no means to get there by walking"</i></p> <p><i>"But we have probably come to the conclusion that there is the greatest need in rural areas, that there is most poverty there, most lack of information and services"</i></p>

Exposed to forced marriage as a focus area differs from the other NGOs as none of them have this as a focus area, but all NGOs mention forced marriage. The poor women are vulnerable and are often married off at an early age. This occurs in developing countries in the global south, and especially in rural areas, which are the areas in which they intervene.

The focus is on the abolition of child marriage for any reason, as child marriage prevents women's schooling, and prevented schooling, leads to women not being allowed to participate in income-generating activities so that poverty continues in a "vicious circle."

Lack of knowledge and education is considered a consequence of forced marriage, and by ending the forced marriage, the education rate of children will be increased. Education includes knowledge about health, how to organize the local community, and primary education. Even though the girls have gone to school, they are still ignorant because the education they can get is not good enough, so one must intervene on many levels. Education is aimed at primary school

and not so much at entrepreneurship, but it appears that the end goal is to be able to participate in income-generating activity.

The focus on health focuses on reproductive health and sexuality. There is a significant lack of knowledge and access to contraception, which is partly linked to attitudes. Girls need information on menstruation, as menstruation is such a taboo subject that they will not receive information about how it works and are unaware of what to do during menstruation. Criticism is also directed at teachers in the global south. Teachers lack knowledge, so NGO5 finds itself forced to teach them in the right pedagogical approach and guide them in what to teach. The teachers also have attitudes that must be corrected to teach contraceptive use.

Wrong attitudes are prominent, and a change of attitude is needed to get girls out of poverty. They do not directly write that children have wrong attitudes, but they describe that their community has wrong attitudes. These attitudes are compared to traditional societies, the backward and the old-fashioned. It is mainly associated with forced marriage and education but also aimed at sexuality, and there is a massive population growth due to bad attitudes. Forced marriage is mostly portrayed as a phenomenon solely due to bad attitudes and inherited old customs.

The poor girls are the rural girls. The basis of the fact that it is in rural areas that the poor girls are located, turns out in the text, to be due to the fact that in rural areas, traditional underdeveloped attitudes and norms remain and have not developed in the same way as in urban areas.

#### **4.5.1. Strategies**

Child marriage is described as a phenomenon that is very widespread in rural areas. Forced marriage does not define a direct cause of poverty, but as they describe the topic, it should be a key to getting women out of poverty and ending the forced marriage. Forced marriage is described as something that occurs when a family lives in poverty. This often occurs when the family "wants fewer mouths to feed." This is because it can be challenging to get food for everyone. NGO5 mentions child marriage as something they have zero tolerance for and will abolish all forced marriage regardless of the context.

They aim to end child marriages and reverse all marriages that have already been performed, regardless of the context and reason for entering into the marriage. This is because child marriage is wrong, and it is enshrined in human rights, and one should not make any exceptions because the children will be better off not getting married. NGO5 states that child marriage is wrong, and they are not in a position to act as a judge in different cases of the reasons for child marriage. Therefore, they will intervene and end all child marriages, although child marriage may save some girls from a household without food and subsequent malnutrition.

Education is also related to child marriage because when girls get married, they drop out of school and give birth to too many children, which in turn leads to a population explosion. This population explosion will exacerbate poverty, as there will be even more people on few resources. This means that working with child marriage will be effective as part of population control. The way child marriage is handled is by education in schools, training of teachers, advocacy work, and mobilization of girls who will function as a kind of civil protection and mobilize against families who have done or will marry away the girl. In addition, there is a strong focus on attitude change, which is the main reason why child marriage occurs.

Lack of knowledge and education is a topic that primarily focuses on health but also primary and lower secondary education. There is not much focus on training neoliberal agents, as seen by the other NGOs in this study. This may have something to do with the age of the girls. NGO5 works with existing schools, as they believe there are enough schools, but the teaching content needs to be of better quality and contain the proper knowledge that the children need. Many children cannot read after finishing school, and therefore NGO5 should strengthen the schools. Poor girls lack knowledge of organizing societies, literacy skills, and reproductive health education.

There is also a focus on contraception, as girls who marry off cause a population explosion and have children at an early stage. Therefore, they must have access to contraception.

Lack or "wrong" attitudes are directly related to forced marriage and to traditional customs. Food shortages are mentioned, but attitudes appear to be the main reason. Wrong attitudes leading to child marriage are reflected in the development programs and how NGO5 presents the topic. Sexuality is linked to attitude problems, and as one can read above, it is best solved with education. Attitudes that are related to sexuality are not directly linked to the girls

themselves but to the rest of society, including healthcare personnel and school staff, where this topic is taboo, and girls who talk about sex and contraception can be seen as prostitutes. NGO5 engages in attitude-creating or attitude-changing work at various levels, which is also included in other interventions.

**4.6. Comparison and summary**

I will summarize the findings and look at parallels and differences in how poor women are presented in the analysis of the NGOs. It is interesting to investigate if there are any significant similarities to draw parallels between how the NGOs frame poor women. If there are, it could impact the assumptions people in Norway have regarding poor women in the global south. If there are large differences, it is difficult to say how and if it will influence people outside the NGOs in their presentation of poor women since there are competing representations of them. With significant similarities, there is a chance that a unified way of representing women could influence people on a large scale.

When I compare the NGOs by looking at similarities and differences, I am searching for the message and narrative structures in the themes I have identified.

**4.6.1. Comparison**

In mapping the discourse, I have identified several themes for each NGO, describing how they reflect their strategies and which development interventions have been chosen. Below is a summary of how each NGO frames poor women, where the main themes are listed (Table 7). This chapter aim to answer the research questions 1.1., and 1.2. (RQ1.1. and RQ1.2.).

**Figure 7**

HOW NORWEGIAN NGO`S FRAMES POOR WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH				
NGO 1	NGO 2	NGO 3	NGO 4	NGO 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited resoruces</li> <li>• Uneducated</li> <li>• Undeveloped mentality</li> <li>• Working age</li> <li>• Rural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dysfunctional culture &amp; social norms</li> <li>• Incapable</li> <li>• Lack of education &amp; skills</li> <li>• Rural</li> <li>• Working age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources</li> <li>• Unorganized</li> <li>• Violent victims &amp; dependence on men</li> <li>• Farmer or indigenous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not have rights</li> <li>• Lack of self-determination</li> <li>• Uneducated &amp; ignorant</li> <li>• Lack of skills</li> <li>• Rural</li> <li>• Working age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposed to child marriage</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge and education</li> <li>• Wrong attitudes (Perspective)</li> <li>• Rural</li> </ul>

The NGOs vary in the number of themes according to what was necessary to sort the content of meaning in the texts. In the figure below (Table 8), I show a short of which interventions or development programs the NGOs carry out. I have shown in the analysis how the description of poor women reflects these interventions. Some are an obvious result of how they describe the women, while some do not have an obvious connection.

**Figure 8**

INTERVENTIONS				
NGO 1	NGO 2	NGO 3	NGO4	NGO 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lending &amp; saving groups</li> <li>• Financial training</li> <li>• educate teachers</li> <li>• Littracy course</li> <li>• Littracy &amp; microfinance education</li> <li>• Life mastery training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microfinance</li> <li>• Teacher education - sexual health</li> <li>• Littracy course</li> <li>• Gender violence program</li> <li>• Family planning course</li> <li>• Climate smart economic course</li> <li>• Local avocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct support of agriculture</li> <li>• Business training</li> <li>• Mircrofinance</li> <li>• Emergency telephone</li> <li>• Political influencing</li> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Organization for violence victims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microfinance</li> <li>• Political influence</li> <li>• Organizational training</li> <li>• Sexual education</li> <li>• Promote land-rights</li> <li>• Entrrepneural skill training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public education</li> <li>• Teacher education</li> <li>• Provide syllabus</li> <li>• Establish children protecting communities</li> <li>• Civil protection</li> </ul>

The first themes I will compare are themes that reflect rural areas and age. This is the most apparent theme derived from the analysis, as all NGOs describe the poor woman as a woman who lives in rural areas. This is something that the NGOs expressly confirm. It is described that this is where the poor women are located, with several sub-descriptions of why interventions are made in those areas. NGO2 has some programs in semi-urban areas but has the main focus on and will continue to focus on rural areas. NGO4 has some individual programs aimed at, for example, slums in South Africa. They do not cover urban cities in general but have selected certain places, such as the slums of South Africa, for political reasons. The parallels between the NGOs are striking and consistent. The background for the choice in rural areas also coincides relatively parallel throughout the NGOs, but with a slightly different description, but the content has the same meaning.

When it comes to age, this is also used as a separate theme in some NGOs. After the analysis, I began noticing a recurring pattern as I went through the development programs. The programs mostly contain activities where one has to be of a certain age to be able to participate. This is the same through all the NGOs, apart from NGO5, an organization aiming at children. However, the ultimate goal of NGO5's projects is for the children to be able to participate in education and income-generating activities in the long term. What separates NGO5 is, therefore, because of its profile, and it is not based on the fact that they describe women in a

radically different way compared to other NGOs. These age-specific development programs exclude young children (apart from NGO5). They often exclude disabled and older people who are retired or unable to participate due to health and illness as well. NGO5, which includes children, obviously excludes adults and older women. NGO3's profile is aimed at social movements and includes all age groups in some of its programs. These are programs that aim to mobilize and organize women. These are not age-specific programs, but this specific type of program constitutes a small part of their diverse range of programs, so the main emphasis of development programs is aimed at non-disabled women.

It must be mentioned that it is not always clearly correct to frame poor women as of working age, as the reflections and descriptions of poor women in the NGO's programs are aimed at women of sexual and reproductive age. It is difficult to set clear boundaries for age groups here, as one can see that being able to work is different from the laws and regulations in Norway regarding the minimum age to participate in an income-generating activity. It is also somewhat diffuse to point out where the upper age limit is for being reproductive. However, there is a large proportion of non-disabled women who are no longer reproductive that will be excluded from several development programs.

Lack of education, or lack of knowledge, repeats itself with most NGOs as most themes engage in some form of rapid knowledge training. It can be challenging to distinguish the different themes sometimes, at least concerning development programs, as a program often covers several themes. Education as a theme clearly emerges as a deficiency that needs to be addressed by all NGOs except NGO3. NGO3's focus on rights advocacy and structure bias is so dominant in the documents that most topics revolve around this. It is pretty clear that this is what they want to profile themselves with. The only theme regarding education is in relation to group organization, which is not about business organization, but an organization in social movements and influencing groups where they learn to become leaders and gain insight into their own rights, among other things.

Regarding NGO3, I find microfinance projects, but descriptions of women as uneducated or lacking knowledge in literacy or entrepreneurship are not defined, even if microfinance projects occur. Projects such as microfinance come with some form of education or training as well.

Under the topic of education, the descriptions differ from NGO to NGO, but parallels can be drawn between most of them, apart from NGO3, which stands out somewhat. The descriptions

are about women who may be ignorant, do not have knowledge, living in a backward society. Most of the narratives related to education revolve around literacy skills, entrepreneurship, cultivating land, and sexual education. NGO1, in particular, has described literacy skills.

NGO1, which focuses on literacy classes, also has programs that combine literacy with savings and lending groups. Separate literacy classes should have the effect that they may be able to participate in other programs, such as microfinance, after finishing literacy classes. NGO2 and NGO4 also focus on business training and finance as important education but also aimed at agriculture.

NGO5 stands out somewhat, based on the NGO's profile. Education is an essential description and results in important educational programs, but it is aimed at primary school education that consists of teaching sexuality and reproduction. Education in sexual health is also offered by NGO1, 2, and 5 but is categorized under different themes at some NGOs. Knowledge about sexual health focuses on child mortality, family planning, and population control. This comes across to varying degrees, but NGO1, 2, and 5 clearly want to control population growth. NGOs 1, 2, and 5 also describe that they train teachers to be able to teach and to some extent, are involved in arranging the curriculum. NGO5 describes that they already have a defined curriculum they want to implement in the established institutions. This is mainly about sexual health.

In summary, education is aimed at financial knowledge, agriculture, and sexual health. All organizations offer the transfer of new knowledge, but to a somewhat varying degree and content, and parallels can be drawn across most of them, even if NGO3 masks programs that, in one way or another, have to transfer new knowledge to participants in the programs.

NGO3 and NGO4 stand out somewhat from the others as they have themes such as unorganized and "do not have rights." The issue of rights is something that is mentioned by the other NGOs as well, but then with a local focus and, perhaps, at best, on a national level. NGO3 and 4 have parallels where the primary purpose is political influence at an overall level to trying to change structural conditions that lead to poverty. What differentiates them, however, is the direction they target the local level of influencing women's rights. NGO3 focuses on mobilization and organization-building (as in interest groups and unions), while NGO4 focuses on influencing local rights and sexual health.

Lack of resources is a theme found in NGO1 and 2, which parallels the other NGOs in varied ways.

NGO1 and 2 define the shortage relatively similarly, as it is reduced to access to capital, jobs, and land. The other NGOs focus on the lack of resources, which is confirmed as "fighting for rights to land to cultivate," projects that aim to create market and development programs that offer capital and finance. However, NGO5 stands out somewhat with its programs, but there are still involved in some programs which are aimed at creating resources and value creation.

Until now, I have described the themes that stand out quite in unison and elaborated that they have relatively clear parallels, despite some minor differences. One is left with similar themes, but also themes that differ, but together they are intervened and could be reduced to fewer themes that cover the similarities between them. Some more themes are not so similar in naming but relate to other themes between the NGOs. Since they are pretty broad categories, i can trace similarities that make them comparable.

NGO1 describes an undeveloped mentality that relies on women's lack of insight. This is to be solved by guiding the woman through established programs so she can be able to develop herself. NGO2 talks about incapable, where the women must be guided through the programs. At the same time, there is a theme of dysfunctional norms, where religion and men hold women back or oppress women and are a direct cause of low progress in development. NGO3 describes women as incapable of participation as they are held back by men and exposed to violence. There is a parallel here between NGO2, 3, and NGO4, which have a relatively large focus on violence against women, and that most women are oppressed as a reason for the lack of progress.

Self-determination is a theme derived at NGO4, a narrative that states that it is the men who decide in a society that holds back the women. NGO5 has a similar theme that deals with wrong attitudes, where harmful customs and distorted norms are focused. This can be combined with women exposed to forced marriage, which is a theme for the main development issue of NGO5. Although it is only NGO5 that has this as its primary focus, but it should be mentioned that all NGOs have mentioned forced marriage as a problem, but they do not work directly to solve this, but indirectly in the form of rights work. NGO5 aims to end forced marriages and goes so far in this work that they have created civil protection groups that directly intervene physically to end already established marriages.



This comparison of the NGOs shows striking parallels between how they describe poor women, how this reflects the practice, and the development projects themselves.

There are some differences of varying degrees, and it is mostly the descriptions of poor women that differ. The differences seem to be linked to the NGOs' affiliation. What makes NGO3 stand out is the focus on the overall structures as causes of women's poverty, although this does not reflect practice in the same way. The question then becomes whether this is because of the financial connection to NORAD that the practice differs from the description of poor women. Both NGO3 and 4 have connections to social movements and are the only NGOs that stand out in that they describe the women as poor due to an overall structure and skewed distribution. They have projects aimed at political influence from an overall perspective. NGO5 stands out, especially as it has a specific target group of children, forced marriage, sexual health, and population control. However, it should be mentioned that this is a topic that the other NGOs bring to the table, but not at the same level and degree as NGO5.

NGO2, which is a directly Christian organization, stands out less compared to the other NGOs. However, the connection to religion is essential in framing poor women and their development work. They describe the causes of poverty due to the wrong culture, which can be linked to a religion that oppresses women, where the main focus is on changing religious leaders' ways of treating women. They also have strategies linked to activity that can be compared to religious missionary work.

Finally, I want to mention a particularly important comparison of all the NGOs that is not made clear in the findings and the comparison in general. This is, all NGOs are financed through NORAD, and they account for large parts of the NGO's funding. This will impact several matters concerning development projects, where they bind themselves to intervene in certain areas and with certain types of programs, according to NORAD's current policy for aid work.

This comparison of NGOs results in a list of themes that maps the discourse of poor women in the global south. These themes result from the comparison, melting themes together and showing a relatively unison framing of poor women (Figure 9).

## Figure 9

A combined presentation of main themes that forms the basis for the discourse:

*“Poor women in the global south”.*

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### Main themes

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- *Uneducated and ignorant*
  - *Lacks skills*
  - *Lacks rights and insight*
  - *Subjected for oppression*
  - *Of reproductive and working age*
  - *Rural and traditional*
- 

Note: data gathered from comparing of the findings.

## 4.6.2. Discourse analysis of documents

I have arrived at a set of representations and analyzed those, arriving at the discourse in play in forming the discourse of poor women in the global south. This chapter aims to answer research question two (RQ2).

To repeat what discourse is, it can be described as a way of representing the world (Fairclough, 2003, p.124) or, in other words, a shared meaning of a phenomenon. Shared meaning can be discussed as defining what is shared and to what extent it is a matter of reflection.

There may be several ways of interpreting the themes and discourses in this research, but the ones listed below (Figure 10) are the most prominent discourses and are some of the most important in this research.

The NGOs in this research contribute to producing and reproducing these discourses when they participate in the discourse through written and oral statements.

I will deal with each discourse listed below and narratively elaborate on these. Therefore, this sub-chapter will deal with the main characteristics and implications of the discourses.

Below is the central discourse I have arrived at listed (Figure 10).

## Figure 10

*The discursive formations in the development agenda, covering the formation of poor women in the global south*

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### Discourses

---

**Neo-liberal  
Discourse**

**Modernization  
discourse**

**Neo- Malthusian  
Discourse**

**Globalization discourse**

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Note: Derived collection of discourses from the analysis of the NGOs

The first discourse that is identified is a neo-liberal discourse. This is a prominent discourse at play in the description of poor women. The interventions also confirm the discourse, where there are projects such as microfinance, establishing markets, business training, and cultivating land. Neoliberalism is a theory of the political economy that dominates the "West's" way of thinking, which requires liberalizing people's freedom to become entrepreneurs. Neoliberalism demands that the state is as little involved as possible and that private property rights are promoted (Harvey, 2007). The solution to poverty will then be at the individual and local level, where modern knowledge and technical solutions should be established to end poverty. This also describes that it is the non-disabled poor women who get the responsibility to end poverty. Such a discourse alone frames women as entrepreneurs and considers that women have the freedom to act and access private property or private-owned resources. It does not tell anything about crooked structures or women's social rights and situation. I think this should have been resolved before neoliberal projects could have any effect on women's poverty.

When a neoliberal discourse dominates the thinking of the NGOs, and they facilitate an economic market in a globalized world, one must have in mind that when one enters the global production network in which one becomes a participant, it could have a disadvantage, as one enters an already established network. One would get a disadvantageous position in the network

that could give little payoff (Dicken, 2015). Those already large established organizations will have an advantageous position in the production network (or value chain) (Dicken, 2015), and the shortage of cheap labor will be able to dominate the areas in which the women are located, so that it may seem almost impossible to take part in the networks on the same terms as the established organizations. It is only NGOs that seemed to not operate through a neoliberal discourse. However, through the analysis, it was seen that an end goal of the interventions was that the girls could eventually participate as a neo-liberal agent in the end.

In summary, a neoliberal discourse will frame women as neoliberal agents or entrepreneurs. The entire responsibility and burden for getting out of poverty will be placed on the poor women, in addition to the burden they already carry. Rankin (2001) believes that microfinance and similar neo-liberal projects will not necessarily guarantee that women to get out of poverty and will rather reinforce gender inequality. Karim (2008, p.10-15) refers to examples where lending products have been used to develop poor women, where it is shown that even if they get access to make a marketable product and nothing has been done about the social structures that dominate the society they are in, the money they earn or the loan they receive is owned by the man in the household. This leads to the men in the household using the money that the woman gets hold of, leaving the woman with a vast loan she cannot use in business projects, nor could she pay back the installment fee. In addition, Karim (2008, p.10-15) describes that because of offering such products, the women become dependent on the goodwill of the NGOs, and the state's absence will continue as before. I would argue that such neo-liberal projects could lead to the state increasing its absence, as the private and free market is supposed to ensure prosperity, and the state's tasks are further weakened as the state assumes that this is no longer their task anymore.

The other discourse is classic modernization discourse, which can also be linked to the neo-liberalist discourse, where neoliberalism is linked to modernization with Rostow's modernization model that ends with a society in mass consumption (Potter et al., 2004, p.89). The fact that most NGOs target neo-liberal development projects is one argument that classic modernization discourse is at play, but several weighty reasons shape this discourse. Linked to the classic modernization discourse is the exclusive focus on rural areas as a place for intervention, or as several NGOs quote, "that is where the poor live." Classic modernization strategy goes way back in time. However, in recent history, one often looks back to the post-war era with the Truman Doctrine, where one intends that everyone should achieve what a

"developed" society should have achieved or is. This is defined, among other things, as growth, industry, and urbanization (Escobar, 1995, pp. 3-4). This makes sense as the focus involves a neoliberal discourse, but it also explains the focus on "the poor living in rural areas." This discourse is perhaps the most widespread, unison, and established in terms of the descriptions of poor women. They create dichotomies such as rural-urban, underdeveloped-developed, and traditional-modern. This is confirmed by the NGOs, where they describe the women as "backward," "traditional," and "dysfunctional societies and cultures," where development should lead to the modern and developed.

What can be unfortunate in including such discourses is that one sees oneself, in this case, the West to which the NGOs belong, as the right culture and values one should aim to achieve. The world consists of many different cultures, where the values one has, are very different. That everyone should develop into a materialistic society and cultivate Western values, but I would argue that this is not everyone's wishes, and this question should be asked before intervening. What about society's own values and ways of life? What about happiness? Is modernity and consumption of goods the ultimate measure of happiness? Both the neoliberal discourse and the classic modernization discourse have such a significant focus that women are approached with top-down intervention. When they are taught entrepreneurship, this comes with promises of a win-win situation that may look like a bottom-up strategy but is instead a disguise.

The third discourse is a neo-Malthusian discourse that looks at overpopulation as a cause of poverty. The exception in the analysis is NGO3, where I cannot find anything that points to such a discourse. I can't find any development programs that point to this, but there are simple narratives about child marriage that could be linked to it. It seems that it is more about the fact that there are children, and that they are forcibly married off rather than it rests on a neo-Malthusian discourse. All other NGOs attach narratives about population explosion and a lack of sex education to such a discourse. NGO2 goes so far as to confirm that it is due to lack of knowledge about sex, that has led to an overpopulation. Similar claims can be found with the other NGOs as well. Established projects are training in contraception and education on what sex leads to. It is presented as if the cause of the population increase is partly due to a lack of knowledge but also harmful norms and dysfunctional cultures. The discourse is connected to a neoliberal discourse, where they believe that if women go to school or work, they will give birth to fewer children, as they do not have time to give birth to children. The fact that I use a neo-Malthusian discourse on this is the concrete interventions where they offer contraception,

training in contraception, and train teachers in what to say about sex to reach a more significant number of women (Potter et al., 2004). several courses aim to train women in family planning as well.

NGO5 links narratives to the discourse that when children are married off, they give birth to more children and do not participate in income-generating work. Overall, I would argue that this number of descriptions and interventions aimed at controlling poor women concerning sex and pregnancy is a form of eugenics movement, as the majority of NGOs are so clear in such cases that they want to influence reproductive practice and prevent life with contraceptives. This can be a dangerous practice. If one looks back in time, one can see that the eugenics movement has ended the lives of disabled people (Bashford. & Levine, 2012, p.1-2).

Considering the eugenics movements and the descriptions of the women as hyper-fertile, one would, like Mohanty in Escobar (1995.p.8-9), believe that when such descriptions take place and make sense in, for example, Norway, it is a sign of power over the Third World. Nor do the descriptions necessarily have anything to do with the truth about the Third World. Escobar (1995) describes that people in the Third World become known through theories and research from those on the outside, and such theories can lead to people seeing themselves as a superior race that must save sisters in the global south. Such a reductive comparison of women in the global south makes one colonize the complexity and daily existence where women are represented (Mohanty, 1984). One must not forget eugenics movements that I argue "the third reich" and apartheid was, when one intervenes aiming at managing the population rate

It is difficult to say anything about the impact such descriptions and interventions have on poor women in the global south. It is possible that sexual education and training in contraception have a positive effect, but when poor women are framed as hyper-fertile, and there is a described population explosion, and at the same time, trying to regulate the population growth, this will contribute to western knowledge-production that will shape the Norwegian population's view of poor women, and one is moving on dangerous ground in terms of the power relationship and interventions regarding such a discourse.

The last discourse is what I call a global discourse. This intensifies international relations and interconnectedness (Potter et al., 2004, pp. 126-127). Firstly, this discourse is linked to both a neo-Malthusian discourse and also a neoliberal discourse. In this analysis, NGO3 and 4 activate

this discourse with their narratives about imbalanced world structures and skewed distribution as a cause of poverty. The strategies to solve this are also linked to the global discourse. The other NGOs activate this discourse to a certain extent with neoliberal and neo-Malthusian thinking.

NGO 3 and 4's primary focus is that poverty comes from lopsided distribution in society and structural causes. Lopsided distribution can be linked to the effect that global production networks have (Dicken, 2015), without the NGOs going into detail about the structural reasons. NGO3's main narratives contain underlying structural causes of poverty, and both NGO3 and 4 have strategies where they engage in political influence internationally to change the cause of poverty. The influence work mainly concerns political influence against large international institutions but also local influence. Political influence can contribute to changing the attitudes and knowledge of international actors and institutions. This is due to the fact that the world is so closely intervened in a web of networks. In a globalized world, the perception of time and distance is different, where the distance is significantly shorter, and one can transfer information across national borders in seconds by technology.

The reason why these are essential strategies for NGO3 and 4 derives from their connection to social movements and the effects such movements have had in different contexts. One could look to the trade union movement in Norway in particular, as this is part of NGO3 as well. NGO4 also acts as an advisory organization for and on behalf of NORAD. This means that NGO4 can be included in political issues that deal with poor women on a national level. Both NGOs operate in an international network of institutions that affect development work. In the best case, such a strategy could help to change the current methods of ending poverty, as one influences international and supranational actors and institutions that are influential and capable of making changes on a global scale by producing and reproducing an international development discourse. A result of a changed discourse will only be seen in the future.

In summary, these four discourses are the ones that dominate the formation of poor women in the global south, and these discourses translate the thinking of the NGOs into institutional arrangements. All the discourses are concerned with having a local effect on the development projects, while they also operate transnationally. Even if the discourses are aimed at having a local impact, they bear the stamp of being managed top-down and are interventionist, where the solutions do not come from cooperation at the grassroots level but are defined outside the

context at a global level. This simplifies the problem of poverty and deviates from the diverse and complicated situations women find themselves in at the local level. The discourses can mask the context, and one can end up simplifying the situation in order to link simple development projects to the attempt to end poverty.

#### **4.7. Discussion of actors**

The obvious actor in this research to be found in the analysis are the NGOs, the organizations the thesis is about. The NGOs are the ones who govern to the extent that they are the ones who initiate projects, they have drawn up an implementation plan, and they are the ones who measure results. The NGOs also have the financial resources to carry out the projects. Those people that the NGOs seek to help are also essential actors, and in this research, poor women in the global south are the main recipients. Who the poor women are, is a factor elaborated on in chapter four, where I analyzed poor women in the global south. When the NGOs come up with a defined project, such as microfinance, there are clear guidelines for how this should be carried out and whom to participate.

As revealed in the thematic analysis, one can see that when it comes to the programs that are carried out, it is about participation. I haven't done any discourse analysis extracting actors, but I want to mention participation as a factor that is linked to the thematic analysis of actors, that in turn, also is a form of discourse. Participating is a discourse that has increased in popularity concerning gender, at least in the last decade. O'Reilly (2014) writes that participation as an approach fails, and the project remains top-down, and the discourse originated from a narrative that participation is more cost-effective and time-efficient. It is a form of capitalist approach. Based on the analysis in chapter four, I interpret poor women in the global south are neoliberal agents and entrepreneurs and the poor women are of working age and in need of education and training so they can get themselves out of poverty.

As I interpret it, the poor woman in the global south is also hyper-fertile. According to the NGOs, there is an overpopulation in the global south that worsens the situation. This comes from a lack of sexual knowledge, a backward culture where girls are married off at a young age and have harmful customs. Therefore, the poor women as an actor are aimed at women of reproductive age. The poor women are located in specific areas, which are in rural areas, such



as villages or the countryside, and they live a traditional life in a culture characterized by backwardness and bad attitudes.

The NGOs descriptions of poor women have a set of qualifications that define them. She is hyper fertile, a neoliberal agent, and lives in rural areas. Young and old people who cannot reproduce or participate in economic activities are not considered part of the construction of poverty, neither are disabled and women living in urban areas. These will be marginalized by the NGOs' development programs, as they target a particular group of women. In this way, one can say that many women in the global south live below the poverty line and lack social rights and security, who are "double marginalized" as they do not appear to be poor enough or fit the NGO's criteria.

The increasing focus on women's participation, as Wilson (2013, p.318) introduces the concepts of women's agency and empowerment. In those concepts lies the fact that women are more cost-effective neoliberal agents, better payers, and use money more sensibly. Wilson (2013, p.318) argues that the concept fails, as he believes that gender inequality comes from patriarchal societies and institutions and that using such concepts will hide oppression and inequality. One must remember that patriarchal systems not only involve the power of men over women, but it is also the oppression of younger men. The system is also not just about gender-specific power relations (Amos & Parmar, 1984).

Mohanty (1988, p.55–57) is critical of these concepts, as they define women as powerless and must be liberated from their husbands. A homogenized image of the woman can reinforce modern racist ideologies, as the man will appear as the opposite of a homogenized image of an oppressed woman (Mohanty, 1988, pp. 55-57).

Now, I have identified the NGO and the recipients. At first glance, it may seem that there are only two actors. NGOs as the superior, because of its resources that manages via its projects, and the recipients belonging to the category of poor women in the global south that I defined above. How autonomous are the NGOs in this research? Are these managed by other actors that will influence the development projects?

I assume that the origin of most NGOs is good and humanitarian intentions. However, as soon as one establishes ties with other actors, for example, with institutions that fund the NGOs,

there will be other interests associated. The financiers could set criteria for the use of the finances and, in some way, have ownership of the projects. This could also influence the way women in the global south are constructed by NGOs. The question now is, who exactly do the NGOs represent? Ofstad & Marin (2019) put NGOs' funding on the agenda, especially in the Norwegian context, since NGOs have become locomotives in the development sector. Whom do they represent? The marginalized or those who finance them? The reason for this question is because it emerged through analysis that a large part of the funding of the NGOs in this research was from the Norwegian state. Several Norwegian NGOs receive over 40% of the funds from the state and some almost 80% (Ofstad & Marin, 2019), and the question then becomes how independent the NGOs are in the end. Are they an NGO or a GONGO?

I just want to clarify that it does not necessarily mean that if an organization is partly state funded, as in this research, or is a so-called GONGO, it is something negative. Being independent of the state can create room for action and freedom. It can create security or trust for recipients, and as Sharma (2014, p.97-100) points out, that the NGO is state-funded in specific cases or situations could create credibility. However, it can also have adverse effects if the women may have negative experiences with oppressive states or are skeptical of government bureaucracy. In addition, where local women are representatives of the NGO and projects, this can create credibility when they deal with politicians or local officers who might not have been so easy to negotiate with if it was a man and they were women in a society with patriarchal structures. While being partially state-owned, marginalized women can get to learn public information, learn about bureaucracy, and methods that can empower women (Sharma, 2014, pp. 97-100).

In this research, the state funding is provided through NORAD as the most influential actor that the NGOs collaborate with when it comes to financing, but other important ones, such as the World Bank, the Paris agreement, the UN, WTO, IMF, WB, also influence the NGOs.

NORAD as an individual actor, is responsible for the largest funding source of the NGOs in this research. This means that NORAD is a significant individual actor for the NGOs and perhaps "vital" for them to complete their projects. NORAD will have great influence and power over the NGOs and will participate in shaping the NGOs and impact how they define poverty and development. NORAD is the directorate that manages the state's aid funds, based on the adopted Norwegian development policy, where they give advice upwards and channel

funds downwards to organizations, such as the NGOs in this research (Norad, 2022a). It is the parliament that decides the goals of aid work and where to prioritize intervention, as well as for which types of purposes and how much financial funds are to be allocated each year. Following instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an evaluation activity has been developed to evaluate the effect of the money that was used to finance, for example, the NGOs in this research (Norad, 2022a). Such an evaluation is a management tool that ensures that the NGOs use the money in the way that politics in Norway has determined. The reports look at the achievement of results, and follow-up reports can be made, which, for example, conclude with recommendations for measures or corrections to meet the desired overall policy (Norad, 2022b). This is a form of disciplining power using monitoring techniques (Foucault, 1975/1977). In addition to having several monitoring tools, progress reports, etc., NORAD has a tool to select which NGOs are to allocate funds from them. This tool is called RAM Light. The NGO's quality is assessed within this. Only the NGOs with the highest quality will receive funding (Norad, 2022d).

To assess the quality, it looks at which challenges the NGO must solve, how the goals are to be achieved, risk analysis, and budget. In other words, NORAD looks at whether the NGO's goals and projects coincide with its own priorities, principles, and guidelines for development. Such clear conditions, I would say, are highly disciplinary, and NORAD is in a position of power where they are "the master of power" where they are in a position to set conditions for action. With such a tool, it is necessary to have measurable results. If one can demonstrate the achievement of results, one must be able to measure this. Poverty is then transformed into something measurable and quantifiable, and women in the global south can be seen as something quantifiable rather than as social individuals with social rights. There are many problems associated with making development and poverty something quantifiable and technical as it leaves room for ignoring important harmful and oppressive social structures which can be a primary cause of inequality and marginalization. This means that the funds the NGOs receive from NORAD, which may be the majority of the NGO's funding, will affect the main structure of the NGO's work as it is managed according to the current policy that lays down guidelines for how the money should be used, and where it should be used, this to ensure accountability upwards.

The NGOs are given freedom of action to use these within certain limits, and along the way, evaluation reports are made to see if they achieve the desired effect and can be corrected in

their work. This is reminiscent of techniques that can be seen in, for example, public administration with new public management, where one gets great freedom of action to manage, but one is always monitored and measured at all stages so that one acts according to what the "management" wants, but simultaneous having a feeling of making own decisions, and having the feeling of that the power lies with you. The NGO gets disciplined, and with the microphysics of power, one can draw parallels to Foucault's surveillance and punishment where one could imagine that one is in prison and being disciplined, but one is given such long chains that one feels free, but is still controlled, by "the invisible hand." (1975/1977, p. 135–149). Dean (2010) describes this as the "governmentalization of governance" as the power over governance is moved away from sovereignty downwards and places it more capillary while the state moves it downwards. This is a form of control technology.

With such methods, the NGOs must control themselves so that the state itself does not have to do this, where the goal is that one can manage the whole society in such a way that the people and institutions do this completely themselves, without knowing that they are being controlled or forced to. In this way, the state can have control over the entire population.

Such an arrangement is linked to bio-politics. As results are to be reported, poor women will be surveyed in a way that produces new knowledge about them, which means that measures can be taken based on the new knowledge. The knowledge is about surveying different aspects, such as poverty and health, and what led to an improvement in the situation so that one can invest effectively in poor women so that they will become productive women. This bio-politics or bio-power is about populations, and the reports from the projects are not at an individual level, but it reports on population groups where they intervene (Eliassen, 2016, p.140). This could be unfortunate, as the NGOs have an interest in the report showing success in order to get further funding for further projects. To get funding, the finances must be used correctly and gain the proper results that NORAD acquires.

In addition to the fact that a policy has been adopted that governs how foreign policy should be, one is also tied up with the OECD, which sets guidelines for aid practice for the member states. This also determines what is classified as development aid (Norad, 2022c). As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirms that economic growth and welfare are essential development policy tasks (Regjeringen, 2022).

At the same time, Norway is bound by the Paris agreement, which also lays down specific guidelines for development policy, such as the five main principles for how countries should proceed to make aid more efficient (OECD, 2022).

All these abstract actors, or supranational institutions, affect how the state operates, which in turn passes on the part of this to the NGOs. This makes them operate in line with this and forms how they think about development. It is a mixture of power and knowledge that the state relies on. OECD guidelines on aid also bind the state. In summary, one could ask oneself, who has the truth or the answer, but there is no such thing. No matter what position one is in, or whether one is a president, an academic, or the EU, everyone is a product of the time or where one comes from. Everyone is oriented to their way of thinking and has their world perspective. There is no universal truth.

There are a couple of other supranational organizations that finance NGOs and contribute to how NGOs can participate in development work and get access to resources. The EU is known for being a gender-friendly supranational organization that funds several projects and NGOs (Lang, 2014). To apply for EU support, one must be a legally charitable organization and not participate in any political activity (Lang, 2014). The EU already imposes some restrictions on what the organizations can operate with and not. This could be of interest in how the possibilities or limitations to constructing women become. In addition, Lang (2014) describes how to get funding from the EU; one must be an established legal charity organization. This requires writing skills and competence in bureaucracy and applying processes. This excludes parts of the population with poorer writing skills and is marginalized by this.

I then assume that one can get a class division within the development organizations and that the women's movement becomes smaller since movements are turned into day jobs for educated people. Such an assumption is reinforced when Costa (2014, p.168) describes how an increasing NGOization in Thailand has led to an increasing professionalization of the NGOs. She describes how NGOs lose their critical voice when development is donor-driven and there are "emerging" experts in the field. Costa (2014, p.169-171) also describes the positive aspects and is not exclusively negative, as middle-class activists in Thailand have contributed a lot to development. But there are still urban women with higher education and women belonging to the middle class and elites who have the resources to get educated to take management positions in movements and NGOs (Costa, 2014). When it is educated middle-class women that are the

ones who come to power in NGOs, it can cause downgrades of rural villages and a lack of authentic representation of women, by maintaining a form of "gatekeeping" (Costa, 2014, pp. 173-174). This can be explained as social reproduction.

In summary, it can be said that the state is influenced by supranational institutions where there is a balance between power and knowledge that contribute to shaping the state to act in a certain way. The state sets a number of objectives for the development work and develops a practice to achieve its policy. These are different forms of govern-technologies. When we go further down to the NGOs, NORAD's financial support to the NGOs constitutes a significant part, and in order for the NGOs to serve the state since they receive support, the NGOs are exposed to this management technology with application forms, follow-up reports and monitoring.

Still, it must be worthwhile for the NGOs to receive support from NORAD. There are also negotiations between the state and the NGOs. The state is in the power of the resources that the NGOs need, so there is not much they can change, but NGO 4, which has an advisory function to NORAD, can have a particular effect in negotiating the discourse.

The balance of power and knowledge results in what the NGOs consider to be "facts" or the "true world," and they construct their development programs based on this, which they, in turn, exercise on poor women in the global south.

All the actors mentioned are knowledge-producing institutions. The poor women will also be able to influence knowledge production, which could be reported back to NORAD and in their own knowledge production of poor women. This is how knowledge is produced at all levels, which means that the "truth" about poor women, or the prevailing discourse, is influenced from many angles and is constantly reproduced.

## 5. Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss topics related to the analysis that I believe are important to elaborate on. These are themes that deal with labeling people, which leads to their marginalization. As we can see in the analysis, how the NGOs label women means that they include some and exclude others by defining poverty the way they do. Furthermore, I will discuss the political economy that governs much of everyday life here in the West, namely neoliberal thinking. Here I would like to draw on perspectives of power. The NGOs' way of defining interventions, which emerges in the analysis, is based on neoliberal thinking where the woman is seen as an entrepreneur and neoliberal agent who must be able to get herself out of poverty.

### 5.1. “Ripple effect” and labels

This section deals with descriptions of poor women. This may sound like a paragraph that reflects the entire research, as it aims to find out how the NGOs frame poor women in the global south. What I am going to do now is to elaborate on a specific aspect of this subject. More specifically, I will try to say something about what such descriptions of poor women can cause when it comes to development projects. This is by linking it to the gender effect by Moeller (2018).

As is to be known, this profit-seeking neoliberal project is quite similar to how the NGOs in this research operate, but this is in disguise with good intentions. I want to point out that I by this do not consider that the NGOs are deliberately trying to deceive the poor women they intervene with. However, the same effects are obtained, and operating in neoliberalism produces similar thought patterns and effects on how one thinks about developing and running a business that seeks profit or its gain. In Moeller (2018), the girl effect's project evolved during a criticism directed at Nike, where they, in their production, exploited poor women to work long shifts with poor conditions.

Large international companies, such as Nike, have a social responsibility, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and Moeller (2018) shows us how Nike uses CSR as a strategy to increase profits in the long run. The girl effect project invests in poor, racialized adolescent girls in the global south, which should provide a "ripple effect." It should end poverty, promote economic

growth, and reduce fertility rates. This explanation seems recognizable in relation to what the analysis has found. The NGOs do not focus significantly on profit; instead, they must get good results to continue receiving funding from NORAD. Gender effect also uses this mindset that I write about, where women and girls are homogenized and portrayed as effective neoliberal agents. The gender effect project is based on a statistic that says that if one invests in girls, one will get 90% in return, while only 30% in boys.

The girls are portrayed as victims who must be saved out of poverty and saved by those who have the power to save. This program does not look at the structural causes of gender inequality and poverty but focuses on what girls can do for development. This is quite similar to the NGOs. Moeller (2018) also shows us that many poor and marginalized people are excluded from the program as they do not fit Nike's profile. This includes pregnant girls, girls who did not have the "right" age, background, color or lacked what the Nike foundation had created; "The third world potential."

In Helms (2014), a group of women in Bosnia Herzegovina is described when they had a knitting project together in psychotherapy, where the women sewed, knitted, and sold the products simultaneously as they talked about challenging problems. Foreign feminists not from Bosnia and Herzegovina believed that sitting together to knit reproduced traditional gender roles. The women in this organization believe that the activity does not reproduce traditional gender roles. It just needs to be valued correctly. Helms' (2014, p.35) argument is that women must not be forced into categories defined by men or others, which often Western discourses are, but rather continue with what is valuable to themselves and their culture. This is something that the NGOs could consider.

There are many similarities between those projects and Norwegian development programs. When the NGOs describe the poor woman as: of a certain age, able to work, located in rural areas, uneducated, and lacking knowledge, this reflects the development projects that the NGOs carry out, where one must be of a certain age (able to work), resident in rural areas, as this is where the projects are carried out and lack the education that the NGOs offer to be able to participate in these development projects, striking parallels can be drawn to the gender effect as well.



In the gender effect, the project was carried out to meet the CSR requirements due to criticism of Nike, and It was used to increase their profits. They advertised that when one buys shoes, some money is donated to this project. There were several advertising posters for the project and the Nike logo on noticeboards and inside the Nike stores. There, adolescent girls were depicted, and it was supposed to try to convince customers that they must buy shoes to save these girls (Moeller, 2018).

As mentioned above, the project was carried out in a way where they defined certain types of girls who could join the project, which excluded many other poor girls. Such a selection of specific girls is to, with their advertising posters, get hold of girls who look poor enough or who appeal to Nike's customer base to play on their emotions so that they buy more shoes. NGOs in this research do something similar when they designate women in rural areas and choose their interventions to compete for funding from NORAD and from other external donors with their campaigns. When the NGOs in this research do the same, by describing a certain type of women, who fit into their programs, and who are allowed to participate in the programs, Marginalizes the rest of the poor women. Women are then double marginalized. This is very unfortunate. It is conceivable that such projects are easy to measure so that one can easily demonstrate promising results to NORAD in the reporting for more funding.

Third-world potential is mentioned and is a descriptive word both for the gender effect and for Norwegian development projects. Doing this takes their whole life and reduces this to simple labels. The NGOs' framings of poor women would have the same effect. Escobar (1995, p.109) describes how women must adapt to such labels as the NGOs' constructions of "problems" in order for the women to succeed in their collaboration with the NGOs' programs. Such labels can have a devastating effect as they create stereotypes about poor women in the global south that do not always coincide with the women concerned.

The gender effect (Moeller, 2018) is also based on the fact that one gets more in return from girls than from boys, which reflects many of the NGOs in the research, as they promote neoliberal projects defining women as agents that use money more sensibly than men. The focus is on what women can do for development rather than what development can do for women.

When women are portrayed as victims who must be saved out of poverty and saved by those who have the power to save, then one can see traces of British imperialism, where Burton (1990, p.295-296) believes that British imperialism and feminism was influenced by a British culture that had a sense of national superiority, based on the imperial status. The feminists create a racial hegemony where the British woman is considered the highest female type one could achieve (Burton, 1990, pp. 295-296). British feminism contributed to shaping the concept of development at this time. The woman considered herself to be something superior. One can draw parallels to this by looking back at the interviews in the analysis (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), where there are several statements aimed at the NGOs having to "save" the women from themselves.

## **5.2. Neoliberal agents**

A neoliberal discourse is a prominent discourse identified in the analysis. Framing women as entrepreneurs and of working age reflects many of the development practices that are carried out. This can have consequences for the women seen in the light of power, such as disciplining. This is a way of governing women that I would call neoliberal governmentality (Eliassen, 2016).

Recurring practices, different methods accrue to offer cheap loans and to fund the women so they could start their own businesses. This is consistent in the analysis, and I attribute it to the fact that the woman is framed as a neoliberal agent, a source of producing goods, and an opportunity to participate in the global production network.

Soederberg (2012) calls this the poverty industry, constructed and reproduced by capitalist interests. Soederberg (2012) also argues that there is a social power in money that is reinforced by this framework it is part of, and inequality is distorted and hidden by the freedom given by voluntary consent, where class division and exploitation are hidden. As Harvey (2010) in Soederberg (2012, p.493) explains, the capitalist system hides the real social relation.

Rankin (2001) confirms that there is an increased focus on women as a target for intervention, as they are considered to spend money more sensibly. One sees an increased focus on women in these development strategies, which explains the importance of my project in researching the framings of women in the global south. Another reason why this becomes important is when

one frames a woman in a certain way. If one generalizes and homogenizes larger populations this way, one will, as an effect, present the others as the opposite, i.e., that men do not use money sensibly. The woman ends up with the responsibility to end poverty and the burden she already faces. Rankin (2001) describes a shift from state-led organization to market-led interventions, where the state disclaims responsibility for making financial capital available to the rural poor and where each individual is responsible for their well-being and must ensure financial opportunity themselves. More specifically, Rankin (2001) uses microfinance to describe this transition. Microfinance is seen as a win-win situation where donors can make a profit, and the poor have access to new resources, but what Rankin argues is that credit does not guarantee a transformation, and it may also exacerbate gender inequality. The obstacle to women's empowerment lies in gender ideologies in society and not in the availability of loans.

The NGOs' large investment in projects, such as strategies as microfinance and similar financial products, will then be able to reinforce gender inequality and build up under a market-led organization where the state they operate in sees that the NGOs underpin this economic organization, which can lead to the state withdraws even more, and abdicates more responsibility to the inhabitants. The focus on neoliberal methods reinforces the framing of poor women as neoliberal agents rather than citizens with social rights. Perhaps social rights should be substantiated first?

Loans and savings were frequently mentioned development strategies for NGO1 and NGO2, but all NGOs saw economic activity as an essential tool to end poverty. Typical descriptions of strategies were that women in recipient communities gather and are offered small and cheap loans so that they can become entrepreneurs. Group lending was quite common in the descriptions. Saving money is also part of such programs. The NGOs undertake the task of teaching women how financing by lending works. Facilitators teach how to handle the loans and provide caring and guidance toward sustainable goals. Some NGOs have literacy courses linked to lending programs as well, so they could be able to develop business skills.

The women who participate in such programs are dependent on the group follows the repayment plan, as such programs issue a larger loan to a group of women, where they are responsible for the administration of the money together (Rankin, 2001). If a person makes a mistake and cannot pay an installment, it will affect everyone in the group. For the individual unable to pay the installment, it could lead to peer pressure, feelings of shame, and humiliation.

In these lending groups, the women can discuss their problems and lives together and receive guidance from facilitators or other supervisors linked to the program. They can discuss the business for which the loan is used to get input from other group members or the facilitators. The group gathers in a fixed location where the instructors or facilitators have complete control over the located group. By lending in groups, they must discipline the time. There must be a schedule for the meeting, when to use the money on the income-generating activity, and when to pay the installment.

In such a group, talking about their problems and lives, they will progress, get to know each other, and gain trust in each other. The facilitators make women recognize a common problem that they are poor. Then they can recognize and understand themselves as poor in how the NGO has portrayed them and come to know that the key route to poverty alleviation is entrepreneurship and market participation. Such lending groups, where poor women gather and share experiences, are also a form of exercise of power by NGOs. The participants are poor women who share their experiences about problems they have in connection with being poor and what challenges they face in everyday life. They can meet like-minded people to share experiences and create a common identity.

With this, they become aware of themselves in the light of the other group members. They learn to understand themselves. They then become a group that has that they are "failed" women who need to change in common. That they are "failed" women, who need guidance to change. By becoming aware of their limitations, mistakes, and shortcomings together, such groups will contribute to stigmatizing themselves.

The NGOs that have created such development programs have a clear agenda of teaching basic knowledge about economics and entrepreneurship. This knowledge defines what women lack since they are part of the program and educate them in the new knowledge that the NGOs bring. They need to lift themselves out of poverty. The NGOs have taught them a new understanding of themselves, what they lack and what they need, and what poverty is and the route out of it. By defining themselves as the NGOs do in these cases and raising awareness that with the right strategy, they will not be poor anymore, the women are taught that their poverty could be self-inflicted. At the same time, when the woman is defined as ignorant and can get out of poverty with the right knowledge, the discourse that is mapped by poor women in the global south is characterized by a certain form of self-blame in the poverty they are experiencing.

By gathering the women together to understand themselves as people who have failed in life, and that poverty derives from this, they will understand that the way out of poverty is to get a microloan, become entrepreneurs, and save the profit to reinvest. They must create a repayment plan and a savings program for the profit the business will provide. This is a form of self-technology where the woman has been taught to act a certain way to escape poverty.

The regular meetings held by the lending groups provide room for further exchange of experience in addition to ensuring that loan disbursements and debt repayments are going smoothly. This regular exchange of experience could help the women who face problems with their business and perhaps the repayment, getting advice from like-minded women so that the woman in question can correct her self-technology, which should lead to a better distribution of the loan. This self-technology they receive from the NGOs enables them to take responsibility for themselves and be active and live productively so that they can take care of themselves and their families. This new way of understanding themselves begins to seem logical to them, and they will constantly try to improve themselves and reach an ideal that the NGOs have established.

I believe that the way lending groups are structured, where they meet in groups and receive education and guidance, is a form of governmentality, where they must use self-technologies that the NGOs give them to become entrepreneurs so that they can stand on their own and finally get out of poverty in line with the NGO's definitions of how poverty works and how the poor should act.

It is not easy to see the formation of power, as they are hidden in good intentions and in the way people live in the West. When women are trained in this neoliberal way of thinking in the lending classes, the conviction itself, and all the links in the actions that help to influence borrowing and saving unilaterally, is a form of power. When one constantly tries to convince the women, by first in groups allowing them to define themselves as failures, and that it is themselves who can get them out of poverty, to show that entrepreneurship is what can change this, this starts to seem logical. This means that the women offer little resistance, as they have first stigmatized themselves and been "served" convincing arguments about entrepreneurship, first from course agents and then from peer pressure.

The education and the conversations in groups aim to give them self-help technologies and the freedom to manage themselves. They get the freedom as entrepreneurs to choose freely what they want to do, and the opportunities are many, and the potential for profit and prosperity awaits.

The loans are described as relatively small, like support for a start-up, with low interest. They are not free, but the interest rate must be low. Since these are group loans, the pressure is even greater because if one woman does not pay, this will affect the rest of the group. This can lead to conflicts, shame, and ostracism (Karim, 2008). This is disciplinary power. As soon as the women are led out to take out the loan, their behavior is overridden. She does not have the freedom and the opportunities she had before she took out a loan. People suppress their freedom of choice. She has to find a way to pay off her loan plus interest, and that means she has to find an item that she can sell in a market with a profit, within a certain time frame, often in an unfavorable market, and it is not certain she has access to a market either. In addition to being disciplinary, these group meetings will act as a panopticon where the woman is strategically placed where they can observe each other (Foucault, 1975/1977, p.200-2009). The monitoring contributes to women subordinating and subordinating themselves.

The NGOs also have programs where they try to make markets more accessible. In this way, the woman's ability to control herself is limited, and she is put under time pressure. The NGOs govern by giving women debt, and the woman is in debt to the NGO and the rest of the loan group. Creating profit is not self-evident, and it cannot always be solved with the woman's rationality alone. In such programs, the NGOs meet poor women who do not have as many choices as women in the West. They may lack food or other needs; they must prioritize being able to get covered. In several areas where the NGOs operate with savings and loan groups, it may be that the women are put in a position where they are at the mercy of the NGOs' help and do not have the freedom to be able to opt out of this help even if it goes against her beliefs and knowledge.

Savings and loan groups fit in well with neoliberal thinking, which is an economic system seen in the West today, where the market must govern itself and profit is sought. The woman is taught to manage herself according to market discipline, profit, and competitiveness principles. This also coincides with the political ideology of liberalism.

## 6. Conclusion

The starting point for this research was to find out how Norwegian NGOs frame the issue of women's poverty in the global south and how this reflects the development interventions. I have done this by using thematic and discourse analysis of documents and interviews by five NGOs, and then shown how this could have an effect on poor women in the global south. A specific theory has not been used to illuminate the findings, but rather a set of theories that fits the findings in order to think critically about framings of poor women in the global south. The purpose with this research was that to contribute and increased insight into the framings of poor women and how those framings shapes development interventions to end poverty, as the knowledge the NGOs produce will influence how Norwegians think about poor women in the global south. This research is only a small part of a larger whole, and that one can illuminate these findings in several different ways and from several different angles. Therefore, I have deliberately chosen not to generalize my findings, but at the same time I believe that the perspectives I illuminate in the research can be developed by others.

### 6.1. Thesis Summary

I started this paper with an introduction where I presented the research problem and the background for the research. A description of the research questions was provided, and the focus area was established. The research is not based on a clearly defined hypothesis, but I have a specific direction in relation to which factors that should be highlighted. This gave me a deeper insight into the underlying reasons for the development discourse. I defined three research questions to answer this research, and this is:

- *RQ1: What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important causes of women's poverty in the global south?*
- *RQ2: What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important strategies for ameliorating and/or ending women's poverty in the global south?*
- *RQ3: Which other actors outside the NGOs have contributed to shape the Norwegian aid discourse that constructs women in the global south?*

I started this paper with an introduction where I presented the research problem and the background for the research. The research questions were described, and the focus area was established. The research is not based on a clearly defined hypothesis, but I have a specific direction regarding which factors should be highlighted. This gave me a deeper insight into the underlying reasons for the development discourse. I defined three research questions to answer this research, and this is:

*RQ1. How do Norwegian NGOs frame the issue of women's poverty in the global south, and how do these framings shape practical development interventions to end women's poverty?*

*RQ1.1. What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important causes of woman's poverty in the global south?*

*RQ1.2. What do Norwegian NGOs typically consider to be the most important strategies for ameliorating and/or ending women's poverty in the global south?*

*RQ1.3. Which actors have an influence on the NGO's way of framing women's poverty in the global south and the strategies.\_*

*RQ2. What other discourses are at play, framing the issue of women's poverty?*

The starting point for this research was to understand how five Norwegian NGOs frame women's poverty in the global south and how this framing creates practical development interventions to end women's poverty. In addition, I also wanted to find out how power is exercised and how this power is legitimized with good intentions. I have done this research by mapping the discourse of poor women in the global south with a thematic analysis of interviews and finding out how this framing creates interventions.

A thematic analysis of the interviews was carried out where I point to how the NGOs refer to and frame poor women and discover the most important causes of poverty. Second, a discourse analysis of selected documents to find out which other discourses were in circulation creating women's poverty and interventions was conducted. By looking over both data collections, I drew out whom other actors help to define the discourse and interventions used to end poverty.



There are no significant variations between how the NGOs frame poor women, just minor variations that function as sub-themes to the main themes that make up the framing of the woman. There were also no significant differences between the NGOs' even as they have different affiliations, which is because they are all closely linked to NORAD as one of the main funders of the NGOs in this research. To a certain extent, NORAD controls how the funding will be used and where. I assume that one could see more significant differences in how women's poverty is framed and differences in the interventions with the NGOs if NORAD did not set any guidelines for the use of the funds.

I have arrived at structures that enable me to give some answers to the research questions, but this, as mentioned in the method chapter, is not a concrete conclusion but a result that was developed using the method and data selected.

The NGOs state that women's poverty (RQ1.1.) is because they are uneducated and ignorant, lack skills, rights, and insight, are subjects of oppression, and the poor are traditional women living in rural areas. In addition, women are constructed as neoliberal agents and of reproductive age. Reproductive age is directly linked to an understanding that poverty is because of overpopulation.

The most important strategies for ending poverty (RQ1.2.) are mainly through education based on Western values, knowledge, and skills. This is directly linked to neoliberal measures, such as entrepreneurship and microfinance. In addition, the education will teach women about contraception, sexuality, and family planning to slow down the increasing population growth.

When I gathered all the data sets and started to extract actors (RQ1.3.) linked to the production of the discourse, several actors contributed to shaping both the NGOs and how they define poor women in the global south. The leading actor is NORAD, the most prominent actor, which sets the criteria for financing the NGOs. Several other actors will be able to influence the discourse to a certain extent, such as WTO, VB, EU, IMF, and actors in the global production networks.

In the analysis of the documents, where I look for which discourses (RQ2) are at play to produce the understanding of women's poverty in the global south, I arrived at discourses such as Neoliberal discourse, modernization discourse, neo-Malthusian discourse, and global discourse. These can also be recognized in the interventions and will have unfortunate

consequences, such as eugenics movements and imposed western values. Poor women who live in other parts of the global south who do not live in rural areas are labeled as developed, modern, and not poor. This leads to large groups of women being marginalized.

Finally, two topics that I find exciting and vital were discussed. I chose to discuss neoliberal agents, where I link perspectives of power to this. The second one is how putting labels on people has consequences, such as, for example, setting strict criteria on who is poor helps to exclude others in need.

## **6.2. Limitations**

The research has relatively few samples of NGOs and interviewees, which means that the sample size is too small to generalize the findings. The interviewees can provide answers that are not necessarily complete or correct, and this is a risk because it is a critical analysis. The interviewees have a personal connection to the NGO as their workplace, and they may try to answer in defense of the NGO. To limit the risk, I chose to use a relatively open interview, where I did not have defined questions but only topics that were so general that the interviewees decided the content of the answers given.

It is difficult to research a conclusion that can be generalized or applied to all NGOs. There are several reasons for this, but the sample size is one factor. Another factor is that the research locks in time at a given point and the language and dictions are constantly in motion, so the results cannot say much about the future. It is also I who selects the themes and the representations and carries out the analysis, and my view of the world can influence this. I will always be influenced by different structures so if someone else had carried out the same analysis, one would perhaps have a different angle on findings and interpretation.

## **6.3. Policy recommendations**

The development strategies underpin a neoliberal classical modernization theory, where women participate as entrepreneurs to develop toward a form of modernity. This directs the development projects toward working-aged women, and many development programs are aimed at these women, excluding others. In addition, those projects apply

to women in rural areas where the projects are carried out. The result is that there needs to be more focus and projects for women who are too young to work or too old and other women who cannot work or become entrepreneurs for other reasons. This means that the poor women in the global south must be of a certain age and live in the right areas. If they do not meet these criteria, there are none or few projects for them, and they are not included in what the NGOs believe are poor women.

The NGOs put the burden of getting people out of poverty on these women.

What can be done with this, is to establish development practices that are more inclusive and where one does not have to meet specific criteria to be included so that everyone can participate or join the development projects as equals. In addition, the focus should be placed on the overall structural causes of poverty and work towards changing such structures instead of placing the responsibility for ending poverty on specific groups of women.

In summary, one should move away from framing poor women as entrepreneurs but instead direct the spotlight on women as citizens with social rights and needs. Participating in the free market with its global production networks is difficult. The "West" depends on cheap labor to continue materialistic prosperity, and the West has an advantageous position in the production network. It would be beneficial to involve poor women in preparing the programs and strategies. Not everyone wants to become like the West is, as there are different cultures and values.

Overpopulation and reproduction are portrayed as more or less a cause of persistent poverty among these women. This is attempted to be solved with training in contraceptives and education about sexuality to change women's attitudes. This activates a neo-Malthusian discourse that believes that poverty arose from population growth progressing faster than the production of food and resources, so poverty persists in these areas. This leads to measures where development projects try to control population growth with contraceptive control, education, and family planning. One can look at the possibilities in the population and not intervene to control the population. Again, looking at the structural causes of poverty is essential, and this can be done with knowledge or advocacy work.

The NGOs' affiliation with NORAD, which accounts for large parts of the NGOs' funding, means that current politics influence the NGOs development strategies. I would recommend that such a system is to be reassessed, giving the NGOs greater leeway in terms of the types of development programs and strategies. NGOs have a lot of knowledge and contact network all over the world, so there is a possibility that the funding could be used more effectively without such a bond.

#### **6.4. Further research**

This research is open ended. It does not provide a definitive conclusion, as there are many ways to analyze the findings. This research is only a small part of a large field, so it opens many more areas of research. There was little research to be found on this topic in Norway, but a rich selection of literature internationally. Continuing the research on Norwegian NGOs will be able to contribute to the understanding of Norway's developmental work. If this research included research back in time, when the issue of women's development was put on the agenda, and up to present, it would have been innovative and unique. This would also be an important contribution to follow how the discourse develops and changes.

To strengthen this research and perhaps be able to say something more generally about this topic, even more people in each NGO should have been interviewed and the sample size of NGOs should have been expanded.

To compliment such an expansion of the research, it would be exciting to research the other actors that contributes to shape the strategies of the NGOs. For example, including NORAD would be a good contribution to further research.

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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Interview guide

- *Why are women important for development?*
- *What are the priorities of the NGO in terms of development of poor women?*
- *What are the biggest barriers and central challenges to achieving gender equality?*
- *What is the most important strategy to end women's poverty?*
- *I would like to understand more about challenges of women in the global south.*
- *Is achieving gender equality all about women agitating for change? Or is it also about men? How?*
- *What are the priorities of the NGO in terms of development of poor women?*
- *Which development assistance project in the global south aimed at women has been the most successful reducing gender inequality, and what can be learned from them?*
- *Are there any new projects or strategies regarding women in the global south as target, to be introduced?*
- *Questions derived from documents:*
  - *X*
  - *X*

