

UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE



“Altruistic filmmaking” as a phenomenon in documentary filmmaking: A study of the production-related and stylistic devices and differentiators in altruistic films that make charity missions possible

- Doctoral Thesis -

A thesis submitted to the University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Creative Arts

Professional Practice Part Submission:

Rotary Action for Maternal & Child Health (Documentary)

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“Altruistic love is characterized by unconditional kindness toward *all beings* and is apt to be expressed at any time in favor of *every being in particular*.
It permeates the mind and is expressed appropriately,
according to the circumstances, to answer the needs of all.”

Matthieu Ricard (2015, pp. 25-26)

In loving memory of my mother,
Kristina Zdunnek-Zarp,
who passed away when I was a child.

Dedicated to the love of my life, Beate,
and our newborn child.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed

Date 12.07.2023

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis is the first approach to describe the emergence of a new phenomenon, subgenre or format in hybrid documentaries and create a framework of the combination of process-related and stylistic denominators (and underlying facilitating technological factors) to describe it: charity or more specific “altruistic filmmaking”.

Based on the historical development of documentary theory and in the research neighbourhood of “video activism” (e.g. cf. Cizek, 2006; Zimmermann, 2009; Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015; Hoffmann, 2019), this research project aims to delineate the evolution of a new hybrid documentary format in the modern documentary as a frameset. The project includes this theoretical part and an “altruistic documentary” production to support the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health (RMCH), formerly known as the Rotarian Action Group for Population and Development (RFPD). The film illuminates their comprehensive Maternal and Child Health (MCH) projects in Nigeria as an artefact of professional film practice. In a reciprocally influenced process that I reflected upon over many years, as this thesis’ author and documentarian, I produced, directed and filmed a documentary called *Rotary Action for Maternal & Child Health* (2013 – 2021) for a charitable cause. It intends to serve as an example or possible representative of “altruistic filmmaking” as a “practice in development” and is deeply entwined and coherent with the framework as a workpiece for demonstration and classification. Commonalities, deviations and symbiotic descriptive patterns additionally exploring biases, stereotypes, and multitudinous factors could thus be illuminated.

The research project is a combined effort that juxtaposes and conjuncts findings from theory, film examples, pertinent case studies and my documentary. It reflects the professional practice and results from theory in a gradual, mutually influential process.

By synthesising the latest developments in film technology, this theoretical part comprises an overview of their most significant facilitating impacts on style, process and protagonists and mentions aspects for the future outlook.

This thesis encompasses the description of imagery features (e.g. immediate, faster, sophisticated effect design, and more) resulting from transformational new technologies (e.g. cf. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009) and their implications as centre-stage theoretical components compiled jointly with the literature-review as a collection of the current body of knowledge in the field of approach, style and aesthetics of hybrid documentary (and “video activism”, e.g. cf. Askanius, 2013). It subsequently seeks to use a genre-specific system to explain basic deconstructive film analytic and semiotic features (e.g. camera concept, montage, rhetoric and cognitive

influencing factors) within the genre topology and visual language to formulate the vertices of the “altruistic filmmaking” format description.

By linking elements of film aesthetics and stylistic devices with the production process, the thesis summarises changes in the process, effects and special techniques (e.g. observational, interfering, manipulative; see discussions on relevant authors, e.g. Nichols, 1985a concerning the “observational mode” and “Direct Cinema”).

Furthermore, with the help of an aggregation of selected landmark cases, the thesis carves out topics and effects of altruistic filmmaking. In unison, the thesis highlights utilising principles as applicable techniques such as the “baby schema” (“Kindchenschema”) (e.g. Lorenz, 1971), various patterns, symbolisms and metaphorical expressions. The research also elaborates on content-linked elements of “persuasion” (e.g. cf. Cialdini, 2007, 2016, 2021; Borchers, 2013) and possible “emotional responses” (e.g. cf. Smith, 1994, 2004) and effects on audiences as descriptive characteristics within this newly researched framework of charity filmmaking, which intends to be helpful as a compendium of potent practical tools.

As its central result, the thesis concludes with a systematic and multi-layered framework that delimits and explicates charity filmmaking within hybrid documentaries. The conclusion also delineates wide-ranging implications, portrays altruistic filmmaking as a phenomenon and circumscribes its topology, unique characteristics, allocations and avenues for further research.

Chapter One – Introduction & Context

The primary goal of the thesis is to identify the central defining aspects of charity, non-profit and thus “altruistic filmmaking”. This objective will be accomplished by combining experiences and analyses from professional practice and related theoretical scientific research.

The intention is to build a framework, extract patterns, create denominators, locate genre correlation and describe other defining aspects, which gradually help draw an overall picture of non-profit, i.e. “altruistic” filmmaking as a phenomenon. This process has been coordinated in parallel under mutual influence with the production of a documentary film as a practical artefact within the research project.

The critical framework for “altruistic” or charity filmmaking will be carved out through an interactive relationship between (1) the aesthetics and (2) the production

process (with underlying facilitating technological factors) of documentary films that are founded on the basic principles of the methodology of respective examples from film analyses, which are at the centre of the theoretical part of this study. These principles will be further elucidated in chapter 6. Film Analyses & Deconstruction and they are also incorporated into the research questions, presented in chapter 2. Research Purpose: Aims & Objectives.

Ultimately, this framework is supposed to answer questions about creating intended and intense emotions or carrying out measures and strategies of “persuasion” (e.g. Cialdini, 2021) to influence audience reactions, instil volunteering or supportive behaviour, and encourage potential donors to give to the depicted projects, charitable causes, or entire foundations.

1) What is the outline/design and purpose of the framework?

Succinctly outlined, a central purpose of the framework is to establish a theoretical classification, allocation and definition of previously undescribed altruistic filmmaking in the corpus of existing and related fields of research (e.g. on manifestations of hybrid documentaries, video activism, war and crisis reporting) and to highlight differences, delimitations, and associated analytical tools for differentiation, as well as conceptualisations for better achieving altruistic objectives in documentary productions.

2) Who could possibly profit from the research on and framework of altruistic filmmaking?

This thesis draws on insights from history, literature, film examples, theory, best practices of existing productions (including analyses and case studies) and professional practice results from my long-term artistic project.

As such, a variety of interested readers could possibly benefit from the learnings, findings and insights of this research or the framework I will contextualise/conceptualise. These are:

- documentary filmmaking professionals (e.g. directors/documentarians, single shooters)
- (video) activists/videographers
- citizen journalists/citizen media
- social, environmental & political activists and advocacy groups
- representatives of charitable organisations and foundations (e.g. PR & media relations, video experts, campaign managers, volunteers)

- (media-affiliated) representatives of service clubs or similar/affiliated groups (e.g. Rotary International, Lions Club, Round Table, Zonta, Soroptimists, Kiwanis and others)
 - scholars and researchers from adjacent research fields
- 3) In which scholarly research areas or non-academic domains, occupations, ventures, or industries does the research/framework create original knowledge? The theory- and practice-based research generates original knowledge through diaristic, developmental, and iterative-reflective insights from the professional practice of altruistic documentary filmmaking about the specificities of these productions in conjunction with their theoretical implications. It produces specific options and insights for how future practice of, for example, the above-mentioned documentarians, filmmaking professionals, video activists, and videographers could be analysed, self-reflected, enhanced, (iteratively) improved, and advanced through aesthetical/stylistic devices, production-related features, artistic choices and hypotheses about audience reactions and emotional responses to best possibly attain the altruistic goals of their charitable film or video project.

The representatives of all sectors of the charity “industry”/“occupation” enumerated above (e.g. foundations, advocacy groups, service clubs, activists) might be keen to learn about these improvements and implications.

As a framework for altruistic filmmaking with insights from professional practice does not exist today, scholars from adjoining research fields in film and television studies, (hybrid) documentary filmmaking, cognitive film theory (incl. fallacies and biases in documentary filmmaking), film semiotics, video activism, citizen journalism, charity, and social impact research may be able to benefit from, build upon or otherwise interact with or further develop the framework of this thesis and its contribution to knowledge.

There is a previously described adjoining and closely related research field of “video activism” (e.g. Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015) that depicts overlapping goals and achievements of the film medium within “social movement” media research (e.g. Askanius, 2012a, 2014, 2019; Coskan, 2016). The body of research around “video activism” can be drawn upon and related to help to construct the abovementioned framework. Section 5. 1. Video Activism (since the late 1980s) in Hybrid Documentary Filmmaking presents a comprehensive derivation of how this field of research is related

and why it is of particular relevance to altruistic filmmaking and has been identified as a reference point and comparative subject for this thesis.

This thesis is about charity and “altruistic films” and the underlying concept of altruism. Therefore, it is of critical importance to explain at first what altruism means and how this interrelates within the more extensive area of documentary filmmaking.

1.1. Variants of “Altruism” in this Thesis

“Altruism”, as a described concept, dates back to its original French version, “altruisme”. Auguste Comte, the well-known French philosopher (1798-1857), first introduced this term in 1830 (Online Etymology Dictionary – Altruism, 2021 [online]), which was later translated into the English language in 1853 by George Henry Lewes. (Scott & Seglow, 2007) Two antonyms existed before “altruism” was introduced. Firstly, “egoism”, which changed its applied meaning over time from “doing or seeking of that which affords pleasure or advances interest” to “self-centeredness”, more commonly used since the mid-19th century (Online Etymology Dictionary – Egoism, 2021, p. 1 [online]). Secondly, the slightly different “egotism” with its meanings of “self-conceit” and likewise referred to as “selfishness” has equally existed before (Online Etymology Dictionary – Egotism, 2021, p. 1 [online]). Out of this context, Comte offered “altruism” to oppose “egoism” on the other end of the spectrum as an “unselfish desire to live for others” (Post, Underwood, Schloss & W.B. Hurlbut, 2002, p. 9) or simplified: “selflessness”. (e.g. cf. Batson, 2002)

In this thesis, the term “altruism” will thus include concepts such as “selfless altruism”, “unconditional altruism”, “true altruism”, and “altruistic love”, as described by Ricard (2015), which I comprehend from these explications to be gradations or variations of compassionate, selfless and freely motivated acts or states of human beings towards other living creatures. “Altruism”, in this sense, means that acts by human beings have a specific type of motivation, a “motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing another’s welfare” (Batson, 2011, p. 210). This goodwill motive of altruism is directly opposed by “contrary forces” such as “egocentrism”, descriptions of a “shortfall of empathy”, unhelpful excesses of “individualism”, variations of “selfishness”, and “narcissism”. (Ricard, 2015) Hence, it is reasonable to exclude or evade all of the opposing forces and the misguided extremes or problematic variants of “altruism”.

The subsequent presents a summary of the resulting further exclusions. These are in particular many other known forms such as “self-interested altruism”, “maladaptive altruism”, “reciprocal altruism” and “egoistic altruism” or numerous

variations of “pathological altruism” (cf. Homant & Kennedy, 2012; Ricard, 2015; also cf. Oakley et al., 2012 as an entire eponymous work on variants of “pathological altruism”). Such and other extremes, self-centred, self-harming and misleading forms, might also lead to (temporary) positive results for the benefactor but are logically not included when using the term “altruism” in this study.

Within this thesis, I will follow Sober & Wilson (1999), who clearly consider the concept of psychological altruism (see the motivational state definition by Batson, 2011, above) separate and causally or conditionally unrelated from the notion of “evolutionary altruism” with “no necessary connection between these two concepts” (Batson, 2011, p. 24). When mentioning altruism here, it is always the psychological altruism that I deem a virtuous motivation and representation of the possibility for systematic moralistic behaviour (following David Hume, who also regarded it as “moral” as explained in Batson, 2011).

In psychological altruism – separated from evolutionary altruism, “[a]n altruistic desire is an other-directed desire in which what one wants is that another person do[es] well. This may involve your wanting the other person to have what he or she wants, or it may involve wanting the other person to have what you think would be good for him or her.” (Sober, 2002, p. 19)

Even more precisely, this thesis will follow the definition of the social and philosophical movement of “Effective Altruism”. Peter Singer (2015), who was among the first to shape and describe this movement, mentions alongside MacAskill (2015) that it includes reason and evidence – which are also at the core of critical scientific thinking – to conduct practical actions or efficacious activities. Additionally, the primary concept behind these actions is their design to ameliorate the world ultimately. (Singer, 2015; MacAskill, 2019)

William MacAskill – also among the co-founders of the “effective altruism” (www.effective-altruism.org) movement and trustee of the UK branch, as well as US board member at the “Centre for Effective Altruism”, describes the part about the effectiveness as “doing the most good with whatever resources you have.” (MacAskill, 2015, p. 15)

When adapting the latter to the international documentary filmmaking community, one could argue that the community can and probably should draw upon every individual’s resources, practical skills and garnered talent or expertise in this

area. With deliberate actions, individual filmmakers can then make effective use of their possibilities for the sake of our fellow humans, animals and the natural environment alike.

Singer (2015) points out about this very young movement – gaining traction since the early 2010s – that it involves people who tend to know about the limitations and do not infer that all of their behaviour constitutes the definition of perfectly ethical. This stance seems to be a worldly but still very ambitious perspective.

Summing up and creatively abstracting from the classifications by Singer (2015), Batson (2011), Ricard (2015), and others above, this thesis will follow the subsequent explication and definition of “altruistic films”:

“Altruistic films” are films that are made or initiated by people with characteristically the aforementioned higher ethics, standards, motivation and disposition. Their goals or intentions (or eventually the effects of their work) are to raise awareness of conflicts, social injustices, grievances, and other complications or issues in the world to initiate change and advance the wellbeing of other humans. They also strive to promote ideals, (sublime) virtues and merits such as equality, fairness, evolution, advancement, liberty, peace and community-building.¹

Following Ricard (2015) and firstly including Batson’s “motivation to be altruistic (...) [as] a *goal in itself*” (Ricard, 2015, p. 16), all additional “modes of altruism”, such as “goodness”, “benevolence”, “solicitude”, “dedication”, “kindness”, “fraternity”, and “solidarity” (Ricard, 2015, p. 16), should be included in the definition of the term.

Since the above terms associated with “altruism” such as “benevolence” and “solicitude” (Ricard, 2015, p. 16) and the concepts, ethics and values associated with driving “the wellbeing of other humans” (see above) in “altruistic films” are linguistically congeneric (i.e. logically allocated hierarchical or adjacent) to the term “charity”, it is valuable to specify a definition of the term “charity”, and also define a “charitable organisation or institution”, as it will be referred to herein.

Accordingly, the thesis will follow the Merriam-Webster definition of charity (noun) as “**1a**: generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering” (Merriam-Webster – Charity, 2023, p. 1 [online]) and incorporate their second definition of charity (noun) as “**2**: benevolent goodwill toward or love of humanity” (Merriam-Webster – Charity, 2023, p. 1 [online]).

When referring to an organisation or institution (depending on the context of the respective sentences), this thesis will follow the definition of the Cambridge Dictionary

¹ Note: With this, I would like to highlight/disclose that I utilised/adopted a similar description of “altruistic films” for my own (professional) activities with ALTRUISTFILMS at www.altruistfilms.de (cf. AltruistFilms.de – Ethics Statement, n.d.).

of “charity” as “an organization whose purpose is to give money, food, or help to those who need it, or to carry out activities such as medical research that will help people in need, and not to make a profit” (Cambridge Dictionary – Charity, 2023, p. 1 [online]).

In coherence with the above descriptions, “altruistic films” are in line with what “Charity Film Awards” – such as the awards with this exact name in the UK – covered with their established events series for the 6th time in 2021. (Charity Film Awards – 6th Charity Film Awards, 2021 [online]) “The Charity Film Awards were created to demonstrate that in a modern world[,] film-making is the most powerful piece of equipment in the charity communication tool box (...) and to praise charitable video that can inspire, incite to action, excite and change behaviour.” (Charity Film Awards, 2020, p. 1 [archived]²)

That this is not a singular event and adventure can be underlined because there are already several other publicly known festivals and awards such as the Monaco Charity Film Festival (www.monacocharityfilmfestival.com, 16th edition in 2022) and the Charity Video Award (www.charity-video-award.de) in Düsseldorf, Germany. The latter initially scheduled its 7th gala event for November 2020 but postponed it due to COVID-19.

With well-established competitions and award ceremonies as those listed above, it is easy to consider the following claims as arguments to underline a developing success story of this movement even though they are apparently formulated in marketing language: “The Charity Film Awards is now an established annual event that attracts hundreds of entries from charities, hundreds of thousands of public views and votes, thousands of donations being made to charities that entered, huge PR coverage internationally and millions [of] reactions through social media.” (Charity Film Awards, 2020, p. 1 [archived])

Even though there are many instances and occurrences that depict the rise of this phenomenon, as this thesis will show, it has never been done before to create a detailed framework about the phenomenon as “altruistic or charity filmmaking” through scientific research in connection with professional practice.

Since this research topic has not yet been explored in this fashion, this thesis will draw on several knowledge fields and professional practice insights. Throughout the chapters, this theoretical discussion delineates the literature-related body of knowledge about “altruism” (e.g. cf. Ricard, 2015), “emotional responses” (e.g. cf. Smith, 1994, 2004) to films and techniques to elicit entailing action, relations to studies

² Note: The marking [archived] means that this website is no longer online in this form. The link to the web archive in chapter Literature & Resources shows the website in the state that qualifies it as a source for the respective statement.

of “video activism” (e.g. cf. Askanius, 2013, 2014), ties with “crisis” and “war reporting” (e.g. cf. Schwarte, 2007), and short case studies from relevant sample productions. It will further put forth practice-based discoveries and reflections from my charity documentary produced purposefully for this research project and findings from genre examples and analyses to set the stage for and devise a new framework for this brand new research field of “altruistic or charity filmmaking”.

To complete the picture, the definition above for “altruistic films” does not mean that these productions must necessarily by themselves have an instantaneous direct altruistic effect, however. They could also, for example, portray (effective) altruism, charitable work or active prosocial behaviour and thereby promote or bring about more altruistic behaviour and effective altruism through actions that audiences will support or conduct themselves.

The latter might result from the inspirational ingredients of the films. On the other hand, these creative works may also depict or constitute narrations about contrary activities (i.e. egoistic, self-centred, radical or non-social behaviour in any realm or scope of human action) and criticise these to provoke or drive a social countermovement indirectly.

Now that “altruism” has been outlined and situated, and a preliminary definition of “altruistic films” has been offered for this thesis, the following segments describe how charitable giving developed, strengthened, and flourished over the past decade during the advancement of the internet and online giving options with the help of audiovisual content.

1. 2. The Rise of Charity, Charitable Giving and Non-Profit Support

Charitable giving is rising across the globe. According to Nonprofits Source (2020), worldwide online donations have constantly grown over the past few years. From \$19.2 bn (2012) through \$21.2 bn (2013), \$24.1 bn (2014), \$25.8 bn (2015), \$27.8 bn (2016) to \$31 bn (2017).³ The Charitable Giving Report’s “Executive Summary of Findings” on the associated Blackbaud Institute website recognises for more recent developments that “[w]hen we zoom out over three years, there are other positive trends taking place. Overall giving grew 19% and online giving grew 42% since 2019. Organizations with fundraising programs hard-hit by COVID-19 showed resilience and a return to growth in

³ Note: These are the latest available worldwide giving figures (regarding online donations) from Nonprofits Source (2020). Other sources on the exact question that have presented absolute figures from 2018 onwards were not freely available/could not be obtained.

2021 as well.” (Blackbaud Institute – Charitable Giving Report – Executive Summary of Findings, 2021, p. 1 [online])

Hitherto and following chapters seek to establish a line of argument, including several aspects of the background of altruistic and charity filmmaking and its existence as a phenomenon, how it is developing or growing and can expand in relevance, is significant for multiple reasons, is integrated into online giving campaigns, and is making an impact through its circulation around the world.

This research background additionally presents considerations regarding the chosen topic, Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and the medium of documentary film. It further describes insights about potential target groups, donors or supporters (that correlate with the target groups of the film). In addition, it depicts the overall trend, shows different possible distribution channels (for later distribution of the film), and reveals that – and in reconsideration, how – these statistics also connect not only to the film but also to the portrayed charity RFPD and, in particular, its efforts.

Thereby, the relevance and integration of audiovisual productions (video/film especially) into social media platforms (among other distribution channels) is signified. Additionally, these chapters illustrate details from statistical research and underscore that this interrelates with Maternal and Child Health (MCH), which is the prominent theme of this research project’s practical altruistic film production. It also foreshadows references to the RFPD documentary where the related sub-topics such as health care, education, and the role of social communities are presented.

1.3. Giving Report – Donation Causes (2020)

The Global Trends in Giving Report (2020) is a biennial survey⁴ that analysed the contribution of “13,468 donors and 1,817 non-donors worldwide” (Global Trends in Giving Report, 2020, p. 34). Taking a close look at donation causes worldwide in this study reveals that 12% of the charitable causes fit the description “children and youth”, 12% relate to “health and wellness”, 8% link to “human and social services”, 5% cover “international development and relief”, and 4% target “education”. (Global Trends in Giving Report, 2020, p. 28)

Regarding the causes in Africa specifically, 22% are aimed at “children and youth”, 11% support “community development”, 9% foster “education”, 8% promote

⁴ Note: This is the current report from this source, as the biennial survey for 2022 has not yet been completed/published.

“health and wellness”, 4% assist “human and social services”, and 4% are devoted to “women and girls”. (Global Trends in Giving Report, 2020, p. 4)

These donation causes are strongly aligned with the efforts of the chosen topic for the RFPD film production and the charity itself, and they make up a total of 41% of worldwide and even 58% of African annual giving causes and thereby cast light on the considerable potential of the film. Chapter 7. RFPD Film Production & Analysis will reveal and further illuminate the film’s content, aims, objectives, techniques, and the charity’s work.

1.4. Target Groups – Typical Donors Worldwide

One insightful finding of the Global Trends in Giving Report (2018) is that typical donors are very likely people that also volunteer locally (67%) or even internationally (9%) and that more than half of them intentionally attend fundraising events (56%). Of course, the global pandemic has impacted subsequent developments. However, the Global Trends in Giving Report (2020) still reveals that 66% of benefactors are volunteers, and 40% of survey participants indicated frequenting fundraisers.

This data is noteworthy and essential for the target groups that are first and foremost addressed by the RFPD film production and “altruistic films” in general. On the other hand, they are also the most likely to respond positively to such films and requests for donations. It also conveys that these people are usually already interested in volunteering and comfortable with or even used to being asked for help and support regularly.

Accordingly, the target groups and possible donors for charity films are mainly already genuinely attracted to or can be enthused about the topics covered, generally socially committed, and perhaps already involved with or can be recruited by service clubs, associations, foundations, or advocacy groups. In addition, these films can, for instance, score points with hot, motivational or emotive topics or reach people who have also internalised the positive fundamental values expressed in section 1. 1. above.

Looking at models from adjacent fields of research, the description of target groups here is broadly in line with Rice & Atkin’s (2013) claim in *Public Communication Campaigns* about “Direct Effects on Focal Audience Segments” (Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6) that “campaigns typically achieve the strongest impact via triggering or reinforcing messages intended for people who are already favorably predisposed (as argued by

the Transtheoretical Model).” (Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6). This neatly integrates with the description of donors and volunteers in the last two paragraphs immediately above.

This thesis, however, explicitly distinguishes between RFPD’s “comprehensive project” (as the campaign) and the documentary about RFPD’s charity project. Although the film’s aims and the RFPD project are tightly linked, the film’s direct target audience (e.g. activists, volunteers, donors, philanthropists, and benefactors) is substantially different from the project’s direct target group (e.g. Nigerian mothers & children in rural areas, local actors and involved parties such as nurses, doctors, and midwives). Ultimately, of course, both the documentary (indirectly via said donors and volunteers) and RFPD’s “comprehensive project” (directly) want to improve the life of RFPD’s target groups.

Although the film artefact in this thesis has not intentionally been created to adhere to this model, the film still overlaps significantly with or aligns with Rice and Atkin’s model in *Public Communication Campaigns* (Rice & Atkin, 2013), taking into account specifics described both above and below, especially concerning distinctions between the film’s target audience and that of the “comprehensive project” by RFPD.

As part of campaign design, Rice & Atkin (2013) highlight “Identifying the Audience” by pinpointing the *focal segments*, *focal behaviours*, *models*, *target audiences*, and *target behaviours* in their section “AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION AND CAMPAIGN DESIGN” (Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 5).

In the specific case of the RFPD’s “comprehensive project” somewhat resembling a campaign, the *focal segments* “of the population whose practices [in this case: living conditions, author’s note] are at issue” (Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6) have been identified primarily as mothers and children in rural areas in certain Nigerian states that the charity covers. As stated by the film and thesis, these affected groups typically have limited access to education and healthcare facilities, among other related problems.

Sticking to the model of Rice & Atkin (2013), the *focal behaviours* (cf. Rice & Atkin, 2013, pp. 5-6, 57-58) that the film strives to affect are depicted or voiced by the film primarily as lacking, in need of improvement or otherwise opposite to those of the engaged activists. In the case of the thesis, though, it is not so much about the *focal behaviours* but about the living conditions, environmental factors, hospitals, networks, roads, and facilities that are focal and in need of improvement through the help of *target audiences* with their *target behaviours* below.

Similar to Rice & Atkin’s (2013) description, the research project then develops its own framework as a *model* (cf. Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6) but is grounded on different

theoretical *models* (cf. Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6), such as Smith's (1994, 2004) "structure of sympathy", Cialdini's psychology of "persuasion" (1984, 1993, 2007, 2016, 2021), Askanius' (2013) taxonomy about manifestations of "video activism", and is based on Ricard's (2015), Batson's (2002, 2011) and others' model-like portrayals and conceptions of "altruism".

The *target audiences* (cf. Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6) of the film are, of course, as described above and again later in the text, potential donors, supporters, activists, volunteers, patrons, and all other groups of people who would be willing to support the charitable cause.

The *target behaviours* (cf. Rice & Atkin, 2013, p. 6) in the film, as iterated across the thesis (such as when highlighting the "similarity-attraction effect" on page 40), are all helpful, supportive, positive, and engaging activities, actions and fundraising (please also consult section 1. 1. for a detailed description of altruistic prosocial behaviour) by involved stakeholders that, as I write later in the thesis "audiences can relate to because they would probably like to see themselves performing analogical activities" (section 4. 1., p. 40).

1. 5. Means of Communication, Video Traffic & Donations

The Global Trends in Giving Report (2018) found out that the top three communication tools of choice to inspire giving by donors the most were social media (29%), ahead of email (27%) and communication through a website (18%). The latest results two years later in the Global Trends in Giving Report (2020) showed that email (26%) was ahead of social media (25%) and followed by the website (17%).

Video data traffic from portable or mobile devices worldwide with 29.149 Peta-Bytes (PB) per month in 2020, a projection of 60.889 Peta-Byte (PB) monthly in 2022 (Statista – Global mobile video traffic from 2017 to 2022, 2020 [online]) and a survey of the "[d]istribution of global downstream internet traffic as of October 2018" underline the dominance of the category "Video" with 57,7% far ahead of "Web" (17%), "Gaming" (7,8%), "Social media" (apparently without video streaming, author's note) (5,1%), "Content marketplaces" (4,6%), "File sharing" (2,8%) and "Audio streaming" (1%) (Statista – Distribution of global downstream internet traffic as of October 2018, by category, 2019 [online]).

Video streaming traffic has become so important because it is continually rising. The above-listed communication tools, like social media, email and website communication, are all designed to implement videos or commonly include video links nowadays. Thus,

these videos for social causes are an excellent choice to inspire giving for the depicted charitable causes, and corresponding films should exploit all available potentials and findings.

1. 6. Stereotypes & Otherness in Altruistic Documentary

Stereotypes play a significant role across all areas of life as “individuals and groups can be said to be the central facts of society. Without individuals[,] there could be no society, but unless individuals also perceive themselves to belong to groups, that is, to share characteristics, circumstances, values and beliefs with other people, then society would be without structure or order. These perceptions of groups are called stereotypes.” (McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002, p. 1). They have also always been influential in media publications and, for instance, fictional cinematic productions, where “regularity, coherence, and reductive simplicity is produced by repetitive forms that have become conventional and are used in a more or less automatized manner. Spectators of genre film or TV series are familiar with the repeating and similarly constructed figural types and stereotypical plot elements attached to them” (Schweinitz, 2011, p. XIV).

Although stereotypes are in no way unique to altruistic films, their possible issues, readings, and interpretations may support or conflict with the charitable endeavour or core values as described in section 1. 1. above.

Some altruistic documentaries may contain portrayals of “the other”/“others” or narratives around “otherness”, i.e. “the condition or quality of being different or ‘other’” (Miller, 2008, p. 587) while “[o]therness-oriented research foci include the cultural context of identity, social stratification, and moral order development and maintenance. Specific examples include ethnic reflexivity in cultural definition (i.e., the role of other as a reference and contrast point relative to sameness), cultural system artifacts (e.g., beliefs, art, morals, law, behaviors, and customs), race and ethnic relations, and a plethora of social justice issues (...).” (ibid., p. 587) Abstracting from my work, intentionality and ethics statements, particularly in section 1. 1. above, I assume that ethical deliberations by filmmakers will likely include trying to avoid, as much as possible, any conscious prejudice, discrimination or spreading of stigmas (of “others”) that could result from negative aspects of stereotyping. Thus, reflecting upon stereotypes’ existence, manifestations, and potential impact in theory and contextually related film examples may be insightful.

To be clear, not all dimensions of stereotypes have to be adverse per se, as “[t]o understand what stereotypes are[,] it is useful to consider three principles which

guide work on the social psychology of stereotyping. No perspective shares all principles to the same degree (...). Nevertheless[,] the three guiding principles we can identify are as follows: (a) stereotypes are aids to explanation, (b) stereotypes are energy-saving devices, and (c) stereotypes are shared group beliefs.” (McGarty, Yzerbyt & Spears, 2002, p. 2) Nevertheless, stereotypes can also be particularly problematic and require further discussion and examination.

As elucidated by Matthew W. Hughey (2014), the current broad research consensus is clear “that race is a ‘social construction’—a set of ideological beliefs, interactive practices, and institutional locations, used to justify the division of people by arbitrary phenotypical features and the unequal allocation of resources and privileges.” Hughey, 2014, p. 4) Dissecting this further in the context of filmmaking, studies and analyses, for example around the cinematic “white saviour” trope (e.g. cf. Vera & Gordon, 2003; Hughey, 2014) regularly shed light on recurring persistent issues around corresponding ideological stereotyping. Such racial, ethnic, class and sociocultural stereotyping, often investigated as part of or concerning “postcolonial theory”, may be present in films and will be considered more around the cinematic “white saviour” trope later in the thesis.

In summation, a short part of the literature review (i.e. section 5. 4.) of the thesis will look at “otherness” (esp. concerning “postcolonial theory”) and unveil a variety of related possible issues and readings that could arise from stereotypes in documentaries and require further research. In section 7. 17. the thesis will then reflect on possible understandings and stereotypes of my RFPD film and filmmaking.

1. 7. Research Strategy

This study includes a combination of literature-based aspects (e.g. technological developments, history/origin investigation, typology, classification, bridges to existing academic research, and highlighting research gaps), exploratory professional filmmaking practice and deconstructive analytic components (e.g. selected case examples, film analyses, reflection and discourse of implications or limitations).

The methodological approach consists of eight consecutive segments presented in figure 1 as the core elements of the research strategy.

Research Step	Description
1. Introduction	This step introduces the topic, problems and field of research.
2. Research Purpose: Aims & Objectives	Research topics, aims and objectives in the scientific environment, including their relevance and purpose, are presented.
3. Professional Practice & Theoretical Approach	The film artefact as a professional artistic practice in conjunction with the theoretical approach is described.
4. Literature Review	In this step, the relevant, correlating and decisive literature for the research basis is analysed, processed and contextualised for generating knowledge.
5. Research Approach: Methodology	This part contains the genesis, preparations and explication of the research method.
6. RD: Data Collection Procedures	Research design elements, data sampling, collection criteria and procedures are depicted.
7. RD: Data Analysis, Discussion & Interpretation	Research design elements, data analysis, associated research details and interpretation are presented.
8. Conclusion	The conclusion summarises the research findings of this strategy elucidated in this thesis, significance, implications and possible further research.

Figure 1: Research strategy (based on a standard process and elements of qualitative research under specific consideration of Cho & Trent, 2014 in Leavy, 2014; adapted, described and refined by the author)

Data collection procedures and data analysis at the centre of the methodology include case examples, insights from film analyses of hybrid documentaries (from documentary filmmaking with altruistic effects) and film analytical-reflexive insights of the researcher's RFPD film production practice. These film analyses and the practice were conducted with mutually interwoven results to conceptualise a framework and compare findings.

The film analysis approach used for the thesis is based on scientific methodology and a step-by-step approach and data collection and analysis rule-set formulated by Mikos (2015). It is realised with principles of dealing with limitations and errors, adhered to quality criteria (e.g. validity, accuracy and reliability) and implemented a typical textbook research approach/design (cf. evaluation and quality criteria in Cho & Trent, 2014; cf. research design in Mikos & Wegener, 2017a). These elements will be helpful for data analysis and evaluation.

Chapter Two – Research Purpose: Aims & Objectives

To reach the research aims and concurrently create the above-described framework while simultaneously realising an exemplary altruistic film production, the following questions from the interactive relationship of the production process and aesthetics (with enabling technological influences) as mentioned above will be discussed.

2.1. Main Research Topic – Centre of the Project: Audiovisual Aesthetics, Semiotics and Proxemics

1.1 Which stylistic devices of film language (including rules, patterns, techniques, and deconstructable elements of the conducted film analyses, created RFPD film artefact, and selected case studies) and their combinations are used in and contribute to charity, social and beneficial “altruistic filmmaking”? What are its genre characteristics and classifications?

1.2 How do the investigated creative techniques and emotionalising strategies contribute to attaining the charitable mission objective?

2.2. Research Topic 2 – Production Process

2.1 What are the aims, purposes, topics and objectives of charity filmmaking, its limits and its production process? What are the motivations, actions and incidents unique to the production process? What conclusions and implications of their consequences can be derived? What are its dangers and opportunities?

Answering these questions will elucidate learnings derived from both professional practice and theory.

As a valuable background discourse, the study will offer depth and insights into the evolution and history of documentary filmmaking and specifically groundbreaking or influential technological developments and milestones that have altered the principles of the production process (from the 1980s, since the early days of modern video activism – pioneered and initiated by Greenpeace and others – as a precursor to charity filmmaking, until the present day) and helped to support the creation of charity videos. Thereby the thesis will highlight which features, changes, stimuli, and new opportunities the useable technology brings to the portfolio of charity filmmaking.

Since specific technological innovations that also affect the aesthetics of “altruistic filmmaking” are a critical enabling factor without which this new documentary form

would likely not be possible (in its present manifestation), I will provide an underpinning that intends to discuss technological progress as an influencing factor for the nascency of hybrid documentary filmmaking, which includes “altruistic filmmaking”.

Among the reasons for this is that technological advances have brought an abundance of new options for documentary filmmaking. These new options present themselves with the possibilities of quicker, easier, and cheaper (independent) filmmaking with a small team (i.e. either a small crew with suitable compact equipment or even just a single documentarian who directs, shoots and controls audio simultaneously). They also include elements of technology, modifications to the production process, and a new visuality and richness of creative options during production and in post. (Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009, especially but not exclusively regarding impacts and developments of the “DV/HDV Camera” [translated by the author]⁵; partially comparable for “video journalism”, cf. Smith, 2011; partially comparable to the “DSLR cinema revolution” and descriptions by Lancaster, 2018)

These films can be produced very cheaply, financed in various new, creative and attractive ways (including alternative financing options such as online crowdfunding), shot by almost everyone in all durations for any purpose on location everywhere and in any production format. Recent historical developments and milestones have led to new creative options for the filmmaker. Thus, production has become extremely easy and distributable across all types of channels by any interest group. (cf. film financing, low-budget and independent production literature such as Gaspard, 2006; Davies & Wistreich, 2007; Dean, 2007; Malloy, 2009; Levison, 2009; Zdunnek, 2010)

Some of the milestones have been, for example, handycams/camcorders, DSLRs, spy cameras, surveillance systems, special equipment, gimbals, small portable drones, inexpensive handheld cinematic cameras and super-high-resolution mobile phones.

⁵ Note: All passages marked as quotations before [translated by the author] have been translated by me from the original German into English. Passages that are likewise marked only with [translated] usually refer to generally accepted translations, even if the source used, for example, only included the German term.

Chapter Three – Professional Practice & Theoretical Approach

3.1. Practice-Related Research/Action Research/Practical Artefact

Practice-related research has been a widely accepted methodology and is often alternatively referred to as “action research” across different academic areas such as medicine, engineering and design. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Skains, 2018) As creative practices in the area of media, arts and film production have proliferated through the years, four different forms have been referred to in related literature. (Skains, 2018) Although there are various terms available in the corresponding scientific literature that, according to Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes (2007), lead to confusion or are employed interchangeably or equivalently, Skains (2018, p. 85) highlights these key categories: “practice-and-research”, “practice-as-research”, “practice-led research” and “practice-based research”. Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes (2007), with their work around the complexities surrounding terminology in this field, had the intention “to provide an important basis for the further development of the debate on practice-based research in general, and practice-based PhDs in particular.” (Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007, p. 2) After closer examination of the numerous definitions, “practice-based research” (Niedderer & Roworth-Stokes, 2007; Skains, 2018) stood out as very suitable, not least because of the subsequent description.

“In practice-based research, the creative artefact is the basis of the contribution to knowledge. This method is applied to original investigations seeking new knowledge through practice and its outcomes. Claims of originality are demonstrated through the creative artefacts, which include [...] scripts, digital media, [...] film, dramatic performances, poetry [...] and other forms of creative practice. The creative artefact is accompanied by a critical discussion of the significance and context of the claims, and a full understanding can only be achieved through the cohesive presentation of the creative artefact and the critical exegesis.” (Skains, 2018, p. 86)

To sum this up, following Skains (2018), the creative process in “practice-based research” is comparable to a test or pilot program. In itself, that does not mean it needs to be experimental, although all in all, this creative experiment is devised in such a manner that it will answer specific research questions about the professional practice and artful genesis of the resulting project – in this case, an (artistic) charity film production –, which the researcher cannot investigate in another way. (Skains, 2018)

Both main topics incorporated in the framework can be researched through theoretical approach and practice-based research with its theoretical reflection to find out “how to

create intended and intense emotions” with those films that ultimately lead to support and donations for the portrayed cause.

3.2. Research Methodology – Overview

Here is a summary of the thesis structure, methodology, and its interconnectedness across the chapters.

The methodology of the thesis initially builds on an introduction to the topic and the research background, gap and need in “Chapter One – Introduction & Context”, delineating in its sub-chapters the elaboration of a conceivable “framework of altruistic filmmaking” (incl., e.g. outline, purposes, potential benefits, related domains, occupations and research fields).

As part of the introduction, in section “1. 1. Variants of ‘Altruism’ in this Thesis”, essential terms were derived, compartmentalised, and corresponding definitions were selected for the thesis. Then the markers, anchors, and linkages with existing literature and practice (e.g. hybrid documentary filmmaking, charity film awards, video activism, war and crisis reporting, social impact) associated with the core topic were established. Sections 1. 2. - 1. 3. and 1. 5. provided contextual background information on the charitable environment to substantiate the need for further research, while 1. 4. elaborated on the relevant target groups, 1. 6. established the relevance of stereotypes and 1. 7. laid out the literature-/analysis-/reflection-based and practice-based research strategy in conjunction with my professional practice artefact to conceptualise the framework of “altruistic filmmaking”.

Based on the preceding introduction, “Chapter Two” then elaborated on the “Research Purpose: Aims & Objectives” and developed essential research questions to assemble and conceptualise the framework.

“Chapter Three” has so far in section 3. 1. presented the concept of “practice-based research” concerning the self-reflective and iterative-analytical production of a practical artefact (here: the RFPD documentary), including its theoretical basis. This section 3. 2. now provides an overview of the overall methodological structure to maintain the consistency of the thesis, foreshadows the following chapters, and pinpoints their interrelationships.

To methodically transfer findings from the (hybrid) documentary (typically altruistic, charitable) case studies, genre models and relevant references into a framework and to conceptualise (i.e. structure, delimit, characterise) it, essential elements for achieving the research goal of the framework are presented in the

following “Chapter Four”. This chapter also serves as preparation for the self-reflexive, iterative analysis and (de)construction of my RFPD documentary in “Chapter Seven”.

In particular, “Chapter Four” includes the contextualisation of essential existing concepts in section 4. 1. on “sympathy” (e.g., Smith, 1994, 2004), “empathy” (e.g., Coplan, 2004; Coplan & Goldie, 2011; more details/examples in section 4. 3.), “emotion” (e.g., Tan, 2013), the “similarity-attraction effect” (e.g., Karremans & Finkenauer, 2021) and section 4. 2. the “psychology of persuasion” (e.g., Cialdini, 2007, 2021) concerning film/documentary based on seminal literature. These notions are critical for achieving the purpose of altruistic filmmaking. They can be part of the framework’s utility, for instance, components of a “toolbox” that filmmakers can apply concretely. Notably, Murray S. Smith’s (1994, 2004) “character engagement” model and esp. “structure of sympathy” is expounded in profundity here by highlighting the latter’s three-step systematic (“recognition”, “alignment”, “allegiance”, cf. *ibid.*), its potential for generating “sympathetic” (cf. *ibid.*) reactions and eventually how this could help achieve the goals of “altruistic filmmaking” (i.e. donations, support, volunteering, etc.). Smith’s (1994, 2004) concept is thereby interwoven into the methodological structure of the thesis to help conceptualise the framework through the chapter findings.

“Chapter Five” then intends to provide an increasingly precise localisation, characterisation and provenance of “altruistic filmmaking”, differentiating and contextualising it within the fabric of existing scholarly discourses on related formats already being studied. This step also encompasses related case studies and linkages with my RFPD production and an examination of the significance of the “social impact”/“social change”/“intervention with social reality” dimension, as well as a discussion of typical and systematised content and thematic areas that have been identified for “altruistic filmmaking” and thus together further solidify the evidence for circumscribing and conceptualising this new format framework. Finally, the chapter delves into “stereotypes” and “otherness”, specifically in the context of “postcolonial theory” for their relevance to “altruistic filmmaking”.

“Chapter Six – Film Analyses & Deconstruction” then serves to prepare and articulate the scientific research methodology for the multi-step film analysis (cf. section 6. 1.), which is subsequently presented self-reflexively about my RFPD documentary in “Chapter Seven”. The approach and analytical elements of the methodology presented in “Chapter Six” were also utilised for the systematic film breakdown of *Before the*

Flood (2016), attached as a cross-reference and prominent third-party film example in appendix A.

The following “Chapter Seven” merges and interconnects practice- and theory-based insights and findings from prior chapters into a diaristic-iterative film analysis of my RFPD film as “practice-in-development”. In doing so, previously contextualised and conceptualised elements are discussed and interwoven to support the assemblage of the framework for “altruistic filmmaking” from practice- and literature-based research and to test, illustrate, (de)construct and compare essential components of “altruistic filmmaking” using my artistic practice example. Readers can find a detailed overview of the chapter structure in section “7. 1. Introduction & Chapter Mapping”.

“Chapter Eight” then serves as a result report, synthesis and final presentation of the conceptualised framework for “altruistic filmmaking”, including the illustration of scientific foundations/references of the format descriptors, determinants and classification factors.

The closing “Chapter Nine” finally succinctly expositis and acknowledges the “Limitations, Open Questions & Future Research” options, as the chapter title indicates.

Chapter Four – Elements that Influence Reaching the Goals of Altruistic Filmmaking

4. 1. Structure of Sympathy & Emotional Response Estimation

Since my research and especially this chapter repeatedly consider “sympathy”, “empathy”, and “emotion”, the following paragraphs will quickly expound upon the definitions of each term.

Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (2011) assess in their influential work *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives* that “[l]ittle consensus has emerged in the psychological literature about what counts as empathy” (Coplan & Goldie, 2011, p. XXIII), and Noël Carroll (2011) underscores in his chapter in the same book that “[s]ympathy is probably a concept that is used with as many various definitions as empathy” (Carroll, 2011, p. 173). After assembling, cogitating and evaluating various definitions of “sympathy” and “empathy” and the research and methods employed to measure them, Coplan & Goldie (2011) eventually declare that “what appear to be the same phenomena have been labeled ‘empathic’ in some experiments and

'sympathetic' in others, and different researchers have used the same term to refer to processes and behaviors that differ." (Coplan & Goldie, 2011, pp. XXIII-XXIV)

Since there is such a wide variety of authors enumerated by Coplan & Goldie (2011) (and others) with countless differing definitions of "sympathy", "empathy", and related terms and concepts, this thesis will not elaborate on the disagreements, nor contest psychological terminology at length and thereby avoid this decade-long discourse. Thus, the thesis will adopt definitions of terms by other authors and dictionaries without expounding on all their ramifications, limitations, debated meanings and complexly interwoven, long-standing disputes and rebuttals that fill volumes by themselves.

Consequently, the thesis has opted to heed Coplan's (2004) definition of "'sympathy' as an emotional response that consists of feeling sorrow or concern for the distressed or needy other (rather than feeling the same emotion as the other person). Sympathy is believed to involve other-oriented, altruistic, motivation." (Coplan, 2004, p. 145). In distinction to this, this study comprehends that "[e]mpathy integrates cognitive and affective processes, creating a complex and dynamic psychological experience that draws on different capacities we have for connecting and responding to the world and those in it. (...) ⁶ The cognitive component of empathy involves using the imagination to undergo a shift from one's own cognitive perspective to the cognitive perspective of the target individual. (...) The emotional component of empathy involves the empathizer's imaginative adoption of the target's emotional state." (Coplan, 2004, pp. 143-144).

Regarding my use of the term "emotion", the thesis will start with Merriam-Webster's definition that "emotion" is "**1a**: a conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body" (Merriam-Webster – Emotion, 2023, p. 1 [online]). This definition is comparable to the somewhat more elaborate and precise definition of "authentic emotion" by Ed S. Tan (2013) – that I will adopt – as "a conscious, cognitive experience (such as fear, excitement), combined with a particular behavior (laughing, crying, the shivers), and certain physical reactions (such as galvanic skin responses, altered heart rate, and pupil diameter changes)." (Tan, 2013, p. 231) As Tan (2013) claims that "there is considerable agreement among emotion researchers concerning these three characteristics" (ibid., p. 231), he subsequently assesses that "this description of

⁶ Note: Only a footnote to a commentary in the original paper was excluded from the quote here.

emotion as a combination of conscious experience, emotional behavior, and physical reactions can be regarded as a kind of common-sense definition of emotion.” (ibid., p. 232) He then concludes that “[o]n the basis of this definition, it is possible to maintain that feature films do indeed evoke true emotions.” (ibid., p. 232)

As Greg M. Smith (2003) writes in his book *Film Structure and the Emotion System*, nonacademics in this field often asked him, when talking about his book “Isn’t that an enormous subject? There must be so much written about film and emotion.” (Smith, 2003, p. 3) He goes on to explain that these people are then “surprised to learn that there is relatively little written by cinema scholars on film and emotion per se.” (Smith, 2003, p. 3) This quote is still in many respects a valid statement, especially if one narrows the argument down to the expectation of rigorous, quantitative, replicable, generalisable full-survey studies about film and emotion as these types of studies are regularly systematically and beneficially employed in other sciences (on other research foci, of course). Notwithstanding, Greg M. Smith (2003), Murray S. Smith (1994, 2004) and, for instance, Ed S. Tan (2013), with his publication *Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film: Film as an Emotion Machine*, have made immense contributions in this area.

As such, Tan (2013), for example, explores the psychology of emotion in the context of “FRIJDA’S THEORY OF EMOTION” (ibid., p. 43) and also offers another noteworthy definition including “appraisal”: “An emotion may be defined as a change in action readiness as a result of the subject’s appraisal of the situation or event.” (ibid., p. 46) In this context he further clarifies that “[t]he term *emotion*, in the sense of the process, refers to the whole body of psychological events, from appraisal to a change in action readiness, and it is not always possible to separate the various stages of the process.” (ibid., p. 46)

Nevertheless, while there are many theories and concepts about “emotion”, this thesis sticks with the “common-sense definition of emotion” (Tan, 2013, p. 232) above (where not otherwise apparent from context).

Since it is worthwhile for filmmaking to appreciate how to maintain emotions, this thesis will consider Greg M. Smith’s (2003, pp. 41-64) “Mood-Cue Approach to Filmic Emotion”. As a central part of his approach, Smith (2003) asserts that “[f]ilm structures seek to increase the film’s chances of evoking emotion by first creating a predisposition toward experiencing emotion: a mood.” (ibid., p. 42) Subsequently, he argues that “[t]o sustain a mood, we must experience occasional moments of emotion.

Film must therefore provide the viewer with a periodic diet of brief emotional moments if it is to sustain a mood. Therefore, mood and emotion sustain each other. Mood encourages us to experience emotion, and experiencing emotions encourages us to continue in the present mood.” (ibid., p. 42)

Although the thesis will not really employ the terms “moods” and “cues” (cf. Smith, G. M., 2003), the analysis of my RFPD documentary will look for “[f]ilmic cues that can provide emotional information” (ibid., p. 42), which according to Smith’s (2003) suggested excerpted possible “cues” list “include facial expression, figure movement, dialogue, vocal expression and tone, costume, sound, music, lighting, mise-en-scène, set design, editing, camera (angle, distance, movement), depth of field, character qualities and histories, and narrative situation. Each of these cues can play a part in creating a mood orientation or a stronger emotion.” (ibid., p. 42) Logically analogous to the “cues” (cf. Smith, G. M., 2003), my analysis in chapter seven will further deconstruct, e.g. audio-visual or rhetorical repetitions, prevalent/coherent/repeated stylistic devices, archetypal portrayals, techniques, models, theories and other effects that could each evoke “occasional moments of emotion” (ibid., 2003, p. 42) which “sustain a mood” (ibid., 2003, p. 42).

However, from here, this thesis widely discusses, explores, incorporates and conjuncts Murray S. Smith’s (1994, 2004) understandings and concepts:

Estimating or predicting emotional responses to protagonists in films has been researched in film studies by author Murray S. Smith within his “structure of sympathy” (Smith, 1994, 2004), which this thesis will consider closely within this chapter. This concept breaks down answers to the fundamental question of whether the audience will engage with and sympathise with the protagonists in the story presented. The structure consists of the following quintessential questions: whether the audience 1) recognises (i.e. constructs) the protagonists throughout the storyline (“Recognition”) (Smith, 1994, 2004), 2) will experience “alignment [which] describes the process by which spectators are placed in relation to characters in terms of access to their actions, and to what they know and feel” (Smith, 2004, p. 83) (“Alignment”) and 3) if the audience is sympathetic with, experiences the situations with and how intense the engagement with the protagonists/characters is (“Allegiance”). (Smith, 2004)

My distinct understanding and continuation from that concept that I will use for the rest of the thesis are that the higher the engagement (here regularly referencing the “morally sympathetic” response to a character; explained in Smith, 2004, p. 62), the more likely it is that the audience ultimately feels pity or sympathy for the people

affected by comprehending their situation and making a “judgement of the character, and respond emotionally in a manner appropriate to both the evaluation and the context of the action.” (Smith, 2004, p. 86) Just like “when a character to whom I am morally sympathetic is placed in a dangerous situation, I may experience unease or fear for the character” (Smith, 2004, p. 62), but going even one step further in this thesis. Adapted to our case, that would mean: If the protagonists in the film are requesting, hoping for or supporting a charitable cause, the audience should eventually engage with them out of emotionally relating to them through pity/compassion, which should eventually spark support, volunteering, activities and donations for the charitable quest, as the audience has made an (un)conscious sympathetic judgement that could entail such reactions.

So, to fully reach that target, “recognition” needs to be established in the first instance. “Recognition” in this context means that the audience, which Smith (2004) refers to as the “spectator”, has in mind a particular “construction of character: the perception of a set of textual elements, in film typically cohering around the image of a body, as an individuated and continuous human agent.” (Smith, 2004, p. 82) At the same time, Smith’s (2004) “recognition” acknowledges and integrates the options for modifications, furtherance, adjustments or development of the character in question. Thus, the characters that Smith (2004) describes are not static but are built on the principles of “continuity, not unity or identity” (Smith, 2004, p. 82). This statement may be more evident than other aspects that drive the engagement of Smith’s (2004) “spectator”.

The audience needs to comprehend these characters as real-world personalities, actual living people, including possible vices of the characters, intra-personal contradictions and many other elements that shape and give birth in our minds to our perception of them as three-dimensional, living people. This perception should be valid despite their faceted and necessarily simplified presentation within a film. (e.g. related to Smith’s section on “Recognition”, Smith, 2004, pp. 82-83; related to Smith’s section on “Unity, Continuity, and the Body”, especially considering the “embodiment” of psychological and physical aspects as defining character traits, Smith, 2004, pp. 113-116; also cf. Smith’s section on “Elaborating Character”, Smith, 2004, pp. 116-118; Smith (2004), however, also conditionally allows flat characters and stereotypes to achieve plausibility.)

The continuity of access to the characters can lead to “alignment”, which “concerns the way a film gives us access to the actions, thoughts, and feelings of

characters” (Smith, 2004, p. 6). Therefore, when a film, in the case of this research project, a charity documentary, intends to reach the outcome “that the film gives us access to the thoughts and feelings of a range of characters, interleaving the attitudinal perspectives and interests of all the participants” (Smith, 2004, p. 7), one option is to attain a strong “alignment”.

The final and probably most significant component for this thesis of Smith’s “structure of sympathy” (1994, 2004) is “allegiance”, which “concerns the way a film attempts to marshal our sympathies for or against the various characters in the world of the fiction.” (Smith, 2004, p. 6) Such “allegiance” is essential when this access is supposed to lead to “sympathetic” reactions and, at best, actions of the audience, like social activities, caregiving, (soliciting) contributions, community service and voluntary services.

Following this line of argument, we can acquire the standpoint that Smith’s explanations also apply to non-fiction in many aspects. Thus, these characters can be portrayed in very similar ways, as several authors present examples of blurring lines in format descriptions, such as between reality TV documentary forms, real-life shows, and authentic reports or documentaries. (e.g. cf. Hißnauer, 2011; chapters in Brunst, 2003; Lünenborg et al., 2011)

Smith (2004) continues to argue that spectators (i.e. the audience) receive audiovisual input as perceptions that are roughly in line (i.e. “congruent”) with that of the portrayed characters. “In addition, spectators⁷ evaluate characters on the basis of the values they embody, and hence form more-or-less sympathetic or more-or-less antipathetic *allegiances* with them.” (Smith, 2004, p. 75) Consequently, it is vital that characters of an altruistic film production represent ethical values and virtues and embrace prosocial philanthropic behaviour, as discussed in section 1. Introduction & Context, within the understanding of “altruism” and its facets when sympathetic allegiances are to be fostered.

Smith (2004) continues to argue that none of his elements of the “structure of sympathy” leads the audience to encounter or ponder the exact same thought processes or that they feel and live through identical sentiments like the ones that the protagonists in a given film undergo. Neither will the audience imitate the character traits. According to him, “[r]ecognition and alignment require only that the spectator understand[s] that these traits and mental states make up the character” (Smith, 2004,

⁷ Note: Typing error of the word in the source corrected.

p. 85). However, for “altruistic filmmaking”, “sympathetic” reactions evoked by “allegiance” seem even more promising than only understanding aforementioned character traits and mental states because “[w]ith allegiance we go beyond understanding, by evaluating and responding emotionally to the traits and emotions of the character, in the context of the narrative situation. Again, though, we respond emotionally without replicating the emotions of the character.” (Smith, 2004, p. 85) Such an emotional response, instilled by a stronger reaction to the characters in filmmaking, can aim at eventually creating allegiances with and thus sympathetic reactions to the protagonists transposed or abstracted, but still according to the general formal reasoning of the sympathetic reaction that Smith describes here: “When the sympathetic figure is tortured by a villainous character, I am outraged and frustrated. But as the villain receives his come-uppance at the hands of the character, I experience relief, satisfaction, even joy.” (Smith, 2004, p. 62) Adapted to “altruistic filmmaking” in general and my RFPD documentary in particular, the spectators are confronted with sympathy-evoking impressions including a multitude of depicted difficulties, maladies, shortcomings or tribulations (in the RFPD film from the unadorned reality of the life of Nigerian families) the resolution of which through support and help of the characters displayed could offer the spectators (and the families equally, of course) comparable ease, contentment and happiness (to the experience Smith, 2004 describes in the quote above).

Even though the audience does not undergo the same thought processes or live through the identical emotions depicted, we can still feel “allegiance” and “sympathise” (cf. Smith, 2004) with, could be compelled by their actions, immersed in their situations, respond to their behaviour or be persuaded by their (in-)direct calls to action. This argument is especially comprehensible when following Cialdini (2007) circumscribing the sophisticated mechanisms, techniques and profound impacts of how people are influenced. He outlines options that are even applicable when not meeting in person or just watching a recording, such as the core principles of “commitment and consistency”, “social proof”, “liking”, “authority”, “scarcity”, and “reciprocation”, adding “unity” (Cialdini, 2021) recently. Most of these methods of influence and their applicability for “altruistic filmmaking” will be further discussed in the next section about “The Psychology of ‘Persuasion’ and its Applications in ‘Altruistic Filmmaking’”.

Some of the following paragraphs, which showcase a couple of film examples, practically reflect and illustrate the theoretical explanations above.

Case Study with Details on *The Altruism Revolution* (2015)

The title of the French documentary *Vers un monde altruiste?* (2015) (ca. 91 Min.) is literally translatable as “Towards an altruistic world?”. It may serve as a valuable short case study as it features Matthieu Ricard, who is one of the most prominent authors on “altruism” with his voluminous, eponymous book (cf. Ricard, 2015), alongside other luminaries, scientists and researchers such as Daniel Batson (e.g. cf. Batson, 2002, 2011), both of whom I have frequently quoted in the thesis, especially in section “1. 1. Variants of ‘Altruism’ in this Thesis”.

As a short logline, “[t]his documentary examines the theory that cooperation and altruism are a part of human nature more overriding than self-interest.” (IMDB – *Vers un monde altruiste?*, 2015, p. 1 [online]) The film’s underlying story is built around the concept and associated claims (supported by corroborating evidence) that signify a transition in research consensus from the assumption “that man is driven by ruthless self-interest” (JavaFilms.fr – *The Altruism Revolution*, n.d., p. 1 [online]) to the hypothesis that selfishness is overcome by cooperation while ultimately proposing altruism/selflessness may be intrinsic and that “[n]ew research from fields as diverse as political science, psychology, sociology and experimental economics is forcing us to rethink human actions and motivation.” (ibid.)

Throughout the film, the following narrative is vividly illustrated and argued from many areas of research and life utilising research evidence, expert testimony, built-in thematically appropriate original footage (e.g. from surveillance cameras, archive footage, excerpts from stage speeches), graphic and video animation, a “didactic, voice-of-God style” (Nichols, 1985a) off-commentary, and accompanied by predominantly (where suitable) pleasantly suave music:

The realisation that and how people, even at risk to their well-being, might selflessly rescue others (even strangers), be mutually helpful and considerate, and even at a very young age in experiments demonstrate forms of cooperation and collaborative goal pursuit, contrary to often (as per the film) skewed portrayals in mass media or misconceptions in society.

The plethora of accompanying mutually substantiating remarks and illustrations are consistent/analogous with the documentary’s description on the film distributor’s website, which states that “[t]here are countless examples of selfless behaviour in nature. Female lions will suckle other lions['] cubs, birds will risk their lives to warn the flock of an approaching hawk[,] and mice will starve rather than hurt other mice.” (ibid.)

The testimonies of the renowned experts and scientists on the aforementioned topics and claims presented in interviews, footage from research and laboratory facilities, reproduced speeches, and the bridging off-text converge towards the end of the film. This converging narrative denotes that “The Altruism Revolution”, i.e. of human behaviour towards considerateness and selflessness, is both feasible and desirable in many areas of research, profession, occupation and life in general, and how this can also be accomplished, for example, in the economic sphere. In other words, “if altruism is intrinsic in man and we can all benefit from acting in a selfless manner[,] then a society structured around altruism should be possible.” (ibid.)

Since this is only a short case study, here is a brief insight into how Smith’s (1994, 2004) “allegiance” may be achieved with one subject in the film.

The documentary is divided into sections, each emphasising individual protagonists more prominently. Some central sequences revolve around the best-selling author Ricard, a molecular biologist turned Buddhist monk who – as reported in the film – is equally reputed for his meditation ability, widely described as exceptional, and his brain, which has been extensively studied. After a gradual approach through slow long shots and nature views with added commentary to a Ricard peacefully meditating facing a mountainscape (initially without naming him), which allows for Smith’s (2004) “recognition” while building curiosity, Ricard is intensively accompanied across sequences, e.g. while he works on literature about altruism, travels to appointments, delivers lectures/speeches about selflessness, meditates in mixed environments and his brain is examined during meditations in a laboratory setting.

At the same time, recurring figurative imagery, audiovisual techniques and stylistic devices, such as a peaceful, smooth camera movement closing in on Ricard’s head and face and recurring visual combinations with nature and content Ricard contemplates or writes about, occur. Through this mixture, coupled with an atmospheric off-screen commentary and his own dignified statements, while focusing closely on his characterisation through words and images, a “spatio-temporal attachment” (Smith, 2004) is built up with him across runtime and scenes in different locations. This attachment, thanks to the deep insight into his world of thought (employing commentary) and statements, facilitates a robust “subjective access” (ibid.) to him as a screen character and thus “alignment” (ibid.) with him. Further detailed explanations and citations around these concepts by Smith (2004) can be found in section 7. 7. in connection with my RFPD film.

Being one of the main characters of the film, the viewer thus establishes a special bond with Ricard in his pursuit of the declared “altruism revolution”, which could also be described as Smith’s (2004) “allegiance” since the “moral evaluation” (ibid.) of him as a preeminent figure, highlighting his roles, functions, proficiency, writings and titles, as well as his noble goals and attitude, presented as worthy of imitation, is already (in)directly carried out by the film. This implied evaluation is ostensibly woven in with the intention that the audience will adopt it as presented. Further detailed analyses and illustrations regarding the construction of Smith’s (2004) “allegiance” beyond this chapter appear, for example, in sections 7. 7., 7. 8., 7. 10., and 7. 16. of the thesis.

A more in-depth examination and analysis of the film also identifies various elements that could be assigned to Cialdini’s (2007, 2021) “Weapons” or “Levers of Influence”. The following is an overview of some of these components.

That Ricard, pictured as noted above with many honours, qualifications and accomplishments, thereby embodying Cialdini’s (2007, 2021) notion of representing “authority”, which enables persuading/influencing audiences effectively, hardly necessitates further scrutiny here. The reliance on this principle is recurringly mirrored in the film, as Richard Davidson, for example, is featured in an introductory commentary as a “star of the neurosciences” [translated by the author] and his prominence as “one of the 100 most influential people in the world” [translated by the author] according to a special issue of “TIME” magazine is depicted through a shot of said magazine, related headlines plus on-screen text and the equivalent above-translated off-voice.

Taking this further, one could argue that the attachment formed between the spectator and Ricard satisfies Cialdini’s (2007, 2021) “liking” because the notably intimate exemplary portrayal of his life, which is often conveyed as simple and non-exuberant, renders him as a pleasant, agreeable and “likeable” character – possibly even worthy of imitation – in the spectator’s mind. Since Cialdini’s (2021) “levers” will often intertwine, the reasoning could be extended to posit that once the spectator has joined Ricard and his goals (i.e. firm dedication and “commitment” of the subject towards the ideal are depicted while a mirroring “commitment” may accrue within the audience; cf. “commitment”, Cialdini, 2007, 2021), they will remain coupled to this attitude (i.e. a “consistency” of characterisations, intentions and actions is displayed, which viewers can observe as homogeneous and may associate with; cf. “consistency”, Cialdini, 2007, 2021) in the absence of some extraordinary factor disrupting the

connection. The subsequent section 4. 2. will flesh out the subject of “persuasion” further in context as it may serve as a valuable tool for documentary filmmakers.

An impressive list of “5 inspiring Social Justice Documentaries on Netflix” by The Salvation Army’s Caring Magazine (Poff, 22nd July 2016 [online]) that share a lot of core ideas and values with the principles of altruistic filmmaking and likely create strong sympathetic reactions from the audiences towards the films’ protagonists are Netflix’s recent years’ productions of *Salam Neighbor* (2015), *Poverty, Inc.* (2014), *Girl Rising* (2013), *Living on One Dollar* (2013) and *Documented* (2013) as collected by Caring Magazine’s Laura Poff (22nd July 2016 [online]).

Whether forming an allegiance and reacting sympathetically to guiltless inhabitants of a humongous refugee camp in Jordan (*Salam Neighbor*, 2015) or to living on the brink of extreme poverty with just one dollar a day in Guatemala (*Living on One Dollar*, 2013), these films form solid relationships and quite possibly impact their respective viewership in artful and virtuosic ways.

These cases and illustrations from film practice explicitly highlight my previous argument in connection to the theory of emotional responses and Smith’s “structure of sympathy” (2004), in which I propose that these will lead to allegiances with and (should) entail action, volunteering, support and donations through (e.g.) feeling pity for these protagonists (and advocated portrayed causes).

This argument is especially valid if we spectators “go on to be moved, by engaging with the character on the level of allegiance, [and] our responses are at a tangent to those of the character: they are acentral, sympathetic rather than empathic. In order to respond emotionally in this way, the perceiver must first understand the narrative situation, including the interests, traits, and states of the characters.” (Smith, 2004, p. 85) According to Smith (2004), comprehending “the narrative situation” (Smith, 2004, p. 85) means “merely that at a given moment in the narrative[,] the spectator must believe that she has some basis for evaluation, in the form of beliefs about what traits comprise the character in question.” (ibid.) As Smith (2004) clarifies regarding moulding “allegiance”, this applies to both “a character or group of characters” (Smith, 2004, p. 62) equally (see also, e.g. my longer related explication including application examples in section 7. 7. of the thesis). This integrated context is why a logical, systematic structure of the story, favourable interests of the protagonists, positive character traits as well as comprehensible motifs and actions of the characters involved should be presented congruently throughout any such documentary.

In the case of the RFPD charity film production, the above-described combined efforts could then ideally lead audiences or those hearing about the cause to donate money. However, there would be multiple other positive outcomes as options as well.

Spreading the word, supportively and positively discussing the topic, creating so-called “satellite projects”, and many more possibilities would arguably be very fruitful results. Other meaningful effects would range from joining the Rotary Action Group as a member or board member, becoming a patron through “lifetime membership”, or eventually starting to volunteer locally or abroad, investing one’s time into the charity.

As a relevant side-argument, it is noteworthy to include in this context that it should not be expected of the successes of a single film alone to create or shape massive direct action of the spectator or audience. Adhering to the generally complex psychological and emotional forces that drive human agency, films are instead relevant as a reminder, a wake-up call or “the last straw that breaks the camel’s back”. Thus, often only in conjunction or coherence with other life experiences will they lead to concrete action.

Here is a summary of this section’s findings, especially following Smith’s (1994, 2004) “structure of sympathy” as they lead to adoption both for professional practice and the framework of “altruistic filmmaking”.

It is of utmost importance to present recognisable authentic characters that the audience can sympathise with, relate to and whom the spectator will each perceive “as an individuated and continuous human agent.” (Smith, 2004, p. 82)

The more plasticity, three-dimensionality and real-life appearance these characters emanate on screen, the easier it is for audiences to “align” with them through understanding and sequentially accessing their “actions, thoughts, and feelings” (Smith, 2004, p. 6).

When “recognised” and “aligned”, although on-screen characters are always imperfectly represented, the “structure of sympathy” (Smith, 1994, 2004) – how I interpret it – has established a goal for the audience as highly significant. This intention is to elicit “sympathetic” audience reactions.

How do all the insights about this critical framework, the showcased film examples, and this section’s theoretical research inform “altruistic filmmaking” and the RFPD documentary practice project specifically?

On the most basic level, editing is about selecting, ordering, adjusting, framing, and timing of the captured footage in scenes, sequences and a dramatic storyline.

Further steps include (but certainly exceed) designing, embellishing, applying effects to and creating a film on all layers possible with an audiovisual presentation. Following are some direct influences that the research had on the professional practice part of this project.

The insights helped select footage that the audiences can relate to from their own real-world experience and to anchor to visuals of which they have contrasting mental images, recollections, and perceptions. They helped create preferences for shots of places the audience have probably been to in their lives, like hospitals, pharmacies, markets, dances, and houses of worship and discarding footage that could create odd or unintended reactions.

The research also influenced the decision process about what preferable footage is and about all of the reflections, possible receptions and questions about how the footage will resonate with the audience. It, for example, explicitly underlined the tendency to prefer shots that represent the most potent, direct and unconsciously effective emotions, depict the gist of the “mothers and children” topic in contrast to their challenging living circumstances, and which are at the heart and soul of the practical project.

Shots that could be considered as “most potent” are, for instance, of such nature that they carry a heightened probability of generating emotional reactions, spectator retention, employing techniques or entailing effects that are well-researched or hard-wired into the human experience.

Freely deduced from and in line with various exclamations about biases, dissonances, and related effects compiled by Rolf Dobelli (2013): Some of these reactions or effects may happen spontaneously, immediately, and un- or subconsciously (e.g. cf. “Groupthink”, Dobelli, 2013, p. 79; “Association Bias”, *ibid.*, p. 149; or cf. his chapter “Why You Are a Slave to Your Emotions: Affect Heuristic”, *ibid.*, pp. 202-204) as, for example, various stereotypes or biases are somewhat hard-wired, tricky to (deliberately) access or influence behaviour, reaction, judgement and emotion without the affected person noticing it. Dobelli (2013) shares various examples in his book, such as concerning the “Halo Effect” (cf. Dobelli, 2013, pp. 118-120):

“We are so used to seeing celebrities promoting arbitrary products that we never stop to consider why their support should be of any importance to us. But this is exactly the sneaky part of the *halo effect*: it works on a subconscious level. All that needs to register is the attractive face, dream lifestyle – and that product.” (Dobelli, 2013, p. 119)

A sample from techniques, concepts, biases, and other research findings that may improve the probability of potency (especially also for the RFPD documentary) are

recurrent depictions of children's faces, particularly newborns, neonates or very young children with specific head dimensions/proportions and facial forms, as discussed more explicitly in the context of the research around "cuteness" (e.g. cf. Glocker et al., 2009; Van Duuren et al., 2003; Schneider, 2013 [online]) in section 7. 15. below.

The theory above on selecting the preferable (or potent) footage also confirms the initial plan and corresponding assumptions to let the most lively, vibrant, and vigorous characters frequently reappear. It also supports giving them the longest screen time and having their most thought-provoking, profound, passionate, and engaging moments arranged in prominent effective spots in the film. These were particularly statements and appearances by Obiora Ike, Hadiza Galadanci, Robert Zinser and Adedolapo Lufadeju. They are at the heart and soul of the RFPD documentary and excerpts intensely discussed in section 5. 1. in segment "Practical Example and Relationship to the RFPD Documentary" and in chapter seven.

We humans can often firstly recognise and relate to, secondly align with and thirdly form an allegiance with people (cf. the three successive stages of "recognition", "alignment" and "allegiance", Smith, 2004) who seem similar to us in substantial areas of life.

Equivalently, this is well-known and extensively studied in psychology as "similarity". Specifically, it is known that an "[a]bundant research confirms that we like others who are similar to us. Empirical studies demonstrate the **similarity-attraction effect** for personality traits, attitudes, hobbies and ideals (...)." (Karremans & Finkenauer, 2021, p. 463)

In alignment with researching, accumulating, scrutinising and presenting various elements, options and techniques in this chapter four and throughout the thesis, the theory above sparks another such promising element. As such an additional harnessable element, the theory above promotes depicting actions that audiences can relate to because they would probably like to see themselves performing analogical activities. Hence showing people who travel around a country to provide for other humans in penury seems profound. Therefore, such actions would be deserving of imitation by the audience. This statement is correspondingly valid due to "the existence of a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare— i.e., [the] altruistic motivation" (Batson, 2011, p. 22) that Batson (2011) postulates.

In this specific case, at least two prospects would reach similarly positive ends: 1) People could appreciate helping others and imitate pictured behaviour, or 2) not only

bring aid to others but also present themselves to the world as a caring social being. The latter is unquestionably not a purely selfless act.

The theory in this section also assisted with the decision to illustrate positive emotions that are key to the human condition and experience that most people enjoy in their lives too, like music and dancing sequences, celebrations, quality time, laughing, and moments of pleasure. These represent highlights expressly towards the end of the RFPD charity film.

The subsequent chapters and sections will offer more such effects of the theory on professional practice and vice-versa.

All in all, the “structure of sympathy” (Smith, 1994, 2004) model above and other theory-based concepts to influence audiences and to affect and magnify emotional reactions are employed and integrated to answer questions of the framework. Segment 7. 5. Preparation: Elements, Components and Techniques to Reach the Films’ Aims & Objectives and ensuing below present numerous applicable devices gathered from theory and practice.

In summary, this research project will combine the above-described theoretical research with reflections about the actual film production and professional practice to create a classification system and reach the research objectives in synthesis with the above-described framework.

4. 2. The Psychology of “Persuasion” and its Applications in “Altruistic Filmmaking”

In his work, Robert B. Cialdini (1984, 1993, 2007, 2016, 2021) was among the first to establish a comprehensive theory on the psychology of persuasion. With these publications, he is adding to this area’s body of knowledge for an impressive period of over 38 years. Through extensive research, plenty of evidence-based studies and scientific publications, he originally located and described six core principles that are of utmost importance to the outcome and impact of successful persuasion.

He formerly called them the “Weapons of Influence” (probably so pictorially because he has been a professor for marketing at Arizona State University) (Cialdini, 2007) and revised them in his latest book as “Levers of Influence” (Cialdini, 2021). They are “commitment and consistency”, “social proof”, “liking”, “scarcity”, “reciprocation”, and “authority”. He claims that each “of the categories is governed by a fundamental psychological principle that directs human behaviour and, in so doing,

gives the tactics their power.” (Cialdini, 2007, p. xiii) Complementing his previous research, Cialdini (2021) added “unity” as the seventh principle in his recently revised and expanded publication.

According to the results of his studies and the approaches and techniques of others he investigated, he points out these tactics are an “enormous force [that] can be commissioned by a compliance professional who deftly incorporates them into requests for *purchases, donations, concessions, votes, assent, etc.*” (Cialdini, 2007, p. xiii)

These tactics he presents could be considered very effectual to responsibly help reach the aims and goals of charity filmmaking, as the following collection of examples will corroborate. These aims often include (multiple) call(s) to action and other aspects such as *voting* (e.g. for parties that support efforts to reduce climate change, cf. *Before the Flood*, 2016), *purchases* (e.g. of healthy, sustainable and valuable food instead of industrially manufactured junk food, cf. *Food, Inc.*, 2008), *assent* (e.g. to believe in a certain world-view, perspective or support activities of a nation, party etc., cf. *Fahrenheit 9/11*, 2004; or to follow a critique, provocative and intentionally enlightening perspective on the precipices of capitalism as in the documentary *System Error*, 2018) and of course *donations* to manifold charities (e.g. asking for single or recurring donations by the charity “Invisible Children” through the documentary *KONY 2012*, 2012).

Sometimes, they are even employed to provoke or accomplish *concessions*, like through Morgan Spurlock’s film *Super Size Me* (2004), which accomplished that only “[s]ix weeks after the film premiered, McDonald’s announced that it was eliminating the Super Size option from its menu.” (Jones, 6th October 2011 [online]) Another equipollent and impressive ramification followed an investigative TV documentary by Günter Wallraff about malpractices and hygiene deficiencies at Burger King called *Team Wallraff: Undercover at Burger King* [translated by the author] (2014) that led to the almost immediate closure of 89 Burger King branch offices of the then-largest German franchise holder (then called Yi-Ko-Holding). The latter was reported in the article “Burger King is now closing these 89 branches” [translated by the author] by Stern.de (Bakir, 19th November 2014 [online]).

Cialdini (2007, 2016) usually applies these “Weapons of Influence” (i.e. “Levers of Influence”, Cialdini, 2021) more often in marketing, leadership, sales and related areas of management sciences and application. Nevertheless, the presented set of examples suggests that they can be especially relevant to many forms of media presentation, such as documentary video production as well.

Case Study with Details on *KONY 2012* (2012) – Also Part of the Book *Persuasion in the Media Age* (Borchers, 2013)⁸

“In 2012, the activist group Invisible Children created a video entitled *Kony 2012* in order to raise awareness about accused Ugandan war criminal Joseph Kony. Though indicted by the International Criminal Court, Kony had not been arrested at the time the video was created. The video quickly went viral as millions of viewers saw the video (...).” (Borchers, 2013, p. 3)

Until this date (8th July 2023), the approx. 30 Min. long video has amassed more than 18.7M views, and 21.8K likes on its initial link on Vimeo (cf. Vimeo.com – *KONY 2012*, 2012 [online]). In addition, a staggering more than 103.36M views and 1.3M likes cumulate on its primary link on YouTube (cf. YouTube.com – *KONY 2012*, 2012 [online]), not counting the multitude of re-uploads, social media shares and other channels. Over 100M of the views were accumulated in only the initial six days after its release (Carbone, 4th December 2012 [online]), which at the time led TIME Magazine, among others, to call it “the most viral video of all time” (Carbone, 4th December 2012, p. 100 [online]).

This mass circulation “was promoted by celebrities such as Kim Kardashian, Taylor Swift, and Bill Gates. The goal of the video was to raise awareness about Kony so that he would be arrested and face trial.” (Borchers, 2013, p. 3) Among the immediate results were actions taken in the US against Joseph Kony as a war criminal, founder and leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) as newspapers covered the developing story and finally headlined “Senate passes resolution condemning Joseph Kony” (Cox, 3rd August 2012, p. 1 [online]). The whole story made publicity only weeks after the initial video release (e.g. cf. Pflanz, 8th March 2012 [online]), and the resolution (cf. Congress.gov – S.Res.402, 2nd August 2012 [online]) passed just months after the documentary spread widely across the internet.

Unfortunately, Joseph Kony has not been captured or brought to justice after that until the present day. However, he had been convicted before and rushed out of Uganda around six years before the film. The US and Ugandan state governments’ combined efforts finally lucklessly stopped and ended searching for him and his less than 100 remaining soldiers in April 2017, pointing out that he ceased to pose an immediate threat. (Pflanz, 8th March 2012 [online]; Baddorf, 20th April 2017 [online]; Hattem, 22nd April 2017 [online])

⁸ Note: The author is aware of the new fourth edition of the same name book. For his latest edition, however, Borchers (2021) has completely removed the example *KONY 2012* (2012), which is vital for this doctoral thesis, as the text will demonstrate.

Despite all this, Timothy A. Borchers offers a conclusion about *KONY 2012* (2012) in his chapter on “Persuasion in Contemporary Society” in his book *Persuasion in the Media Age* (Borchers, 2013). His reasonings are that this viral video project – considering efficacy limits – is an instructive example to teach and substantiate multiple crucial features of present-day persuasion surrounded by the media. (Borchers, 2013) “First, persuaders have the ability to command large audiences. (...) Second, the video was promoted through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. (...) Finally, the video asked viewers to directly contact activists and political leaders as a way to create social change. A small organization was able to quickly gain attention and promote its message using both social and traditional media.” (Borchers, 2013, p. 3)

Some of the same tactics as presented in this case study and the psychological principles or “Weapons of Influence” (cf. Cialdini, 2007, 2016; i.e. “Levers of Influence”, Cialdini, 2021) were helpful for incorporating into the RFPD film project professional practice. These techniques are useful, for example, to motivate people to *donate* money and to *assent* to a specific understanding of the problems of population development, maternal and child health and the immediate need for action to deal with those issues.

4.3. Limitations, Focus, Empathy & Additional Avenues

While some authors may regard elements of Smith’s (1994, 2004) “structure of sympathy” model as limited, it was still the “sympathy” model used and considered a lot for this thesis as it holds valuable insights and can be applied to “altruistic film” in various ways, as presented across the thesis. As highlighted with regards to Coplan & Goldie (2011) and Carroll (2011) before, there is a lack of consensus on the terminology around “sympathy” and “empathy” in the scientific community, which is why I have clarified my understanding of these terms above.

Overall, one of the critical and focal findings of the thesis, as elucidated via a structured, multi-causal and multi-thematic approach throughout, is that the objective to garner support and stimulate volunteer work, drive charitable action, generate donations and gifts (or even elicit considerations to bequeath to a charity) is situated above the methods and strategies to reach it. So, any technique or avenue discussed and regrettably excluded (e.g. due to resource, space, time or other constraints) may be helpful and worthy of exploring with its relation to its capabilities, features and qualities to attain the overarching objective.

Some of these other concepts and avenues that could apply successfully to attain these same goals and may be applied by other researchers and practitioners alike in more depth may include the theory around “contagiousness” from Jonah Berger’s (2013) work *Contagious: Why Things Catch On* (and related publications), additional insights from persuasion techniques such as those researched by Soules (2015), Cialdini (2021) and Borchers (2013, 2021) (discussed in the thesis; see also the previous section 4. 2.), the theory around “nudging” by Nobel Prize winner Richard H. Thaler and his colleague Cass R. Sunstein (2021) (applied to “altruistic filmmaking”: to change or “nudge” human behaviour to do good and be good, to serve a grand noble cause and ultimately humanity), and Adam Grant’s (2014) research on psychological implications of “giving” summed up succinctly for public audiences in *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success* (Grant, 2014) and many other models, theories and concepts that could affect human psychology positively in such a way to spark off support for the greater good (here: directly supporting a charitable project or vision, taking decisive interventionist action, conducting informed voting or political involvement, aiding by volunteering or influencing the behaviour and actions of audiences in general).

Even seminal insights from other fields, such as (e-)learning, propaganda, marketing, advertisement, and sales (psychology), could also be probed in terms of cross-comparisons with approaches to and reaching objectives of “altruistic filmmaking”.

Of course, any thesis has limitations and thus cannot explore everything in depth. Therefore, the above enumeration may serve as an inspiration, starting point or addition for other researchers or practitioners to explore, investigate, experiment with and employ in their work and connect with “altruistic filmmaking” where it applies and may succeed.

To sum it up succinctly, all ethically sound, reasonable, valuable, righteous and justifiable techniques, concepts and models that could aid in reaching “altruistic filmmaking’s” ambitions and purposes could lead to research thereof and possibly be pursued.

While this thesis looks a lot at concepts around “sympathy”, “altruistic film” in general will certainly also benefit from achieving “empathetic reactions” to characters entangled with causes and situations. According to Coplan (2004), “empathy requires the following four conditions: (1) the empathizer experiences psychological states that are either identical or very similar to those of the target, (2) perspective-taking—the empathizer imaginatively experiences the target’s experiences from the target’s point of

view, (3) (1) is the case by virtue of (2), and (4) the empathizer maintains self-other differentiation.” (Coplan, 2004, p. 144)

Here are two extreme and impactful examples of filmmaking recommended by this thesis for more profound research, intentionally selected from the formats of documentary and cinematic drama. I picked them because I believe that many audiences would agree that watching either film is an intense emotional experience, with some parts almost unbearable and at least discomforting, if not significantly distressing, painful, or excruciating. Another intriguing aspect about these films is that their generated emotional reactions may be based on both or either “sympathetic” or “empathetic” reactions, also depending – as I would argue – substantially on the background, circumstances, experiences, life and maybe capacities of the audience.

Furthermore, these are films where inducing “empathetic reactions” (where and if learnings may be adaptable, re-producible, re-enactable or transformable in any way) may successfully attain the mission objective of “altruistic film” if filmmakers, activists and charities could harness insights from them, decided and embarked on doing so and their respective topics, approach, shooting environments, narration, protagonists, situations and moral/ethical deliberations allowed for it:

1) Audiences may feel significant discomfort, terrifying horror, despair and insecurity, experiencing these intense “emotional reactions” when watching the true account of the Somali nomad girl turned world-renowned American model and UN spokesperson “Waris Dirie” in the ca. 120 Min. cinematic (biographical) drama *Desert Flower* (2009) (not a documentary but could be one; adapted from the model’s eponymous novel about her life), undergo female circumcision (aged 5), fleeing forced underage marriage (aged 13; when bought to become an old man’s fourth wife), and related incredibly dreadful, abhorrent situations in Somalia and during her later years in London (etc.) but also uplifting and inspiring ones. (e.g. cf. IMDB – *Desert Flower*, 2009 [online]; DesertFlowerFoundation.org – Waris Dirie, n.d. [online])

I still cannot unsee the screen adaptation imagery of her (i.e. the actor’s) unspeakable ritualistic/traditional circumcision (i.e. genital mutilation) in the Somalian desert more than thirteen years after only once watching the entire film without interruption.

This thesis does not address or assess the most intense scenes (like those described immediately before) that some audiences may not be able to endure watching, where others may “sympathise” or “empathise” with the main character, depending on their

respective history, capabilities and experiences and which would require comprehensive, detailed analysis and explanations that would reach beyond the scope of this research.

Still, here is an example from Jens Eder (2010) that corroborates the claim that empathising correlates with (and could be enabled or facilitated by) preexisting experiences. Eder (2010) argues that “[w]henver we are assuming the perspective of characters in relevant respects—for example, our knowledge about a situation matches the characters’ knowledge—we are involved in (partial) *identification*. When we are additionally developing feelings similar to those of the characters—for example, when we are watching (...) [a specific] separation (...) and relive emotions associated with our own experiences of separation—then we are practicing *empathy*.” (Eder, 2010, p. 34) Correlating with the above and regarding “the emotional potential of characters” (Eder, 2010, p. 35) in character design, Eder (2010) then eloquently posits that “[b]ased on current emotion research one can assume that characters and their situations evoke in viewers’ perspectivized appraisals that are associated with particular body reactions, thus becoming emotions. These appraisals occur on different levels of information processing and are influenced by nature, culture, and individual experiences.” (Eder, 2010, p. 35)

Here are scenes/sequences where an empathetic reaction to “Waris Dirie” is quite possible:

- a) Anyone who has ever travelled to a country where they felt alien, did not speak the local language or were unversed in the culture (or plus, e.g. norms, settings, procedures, and technology) may be (easier) able to empathise with some of “Waris Dirie’s” first encounters in London, just as Coplan (2004) argues that “[w]hen I empathize with another, I take up his or her psychological perspective and imaginatively experience, to some degree or other, what he or she experiences.” (Coplan, 2004, p. 143) If an audience cannot relate or react in the described manner, they may resort to sympathy (i.e. feeling pity, concern or sorrow for Waris) in some of these settings instead.
- b) Anyone who has ever witnessed, endured or otherwise had close contact with abusive relationships or toxic and dangerous human behaviour may react highly empathetic to Waris’ encounters with inappropriate, offensive, fierce, and violent behaving men. Watchers may agree with Coplan’s (2004) statement that for empathy to occur, “[i]t is not enough for me to experience emotions related to or triggered by the target individual’s emotions. I must experience emotions that are *qualitatively the same* as those of the target, though I may experience

them less intensely than the target does.” (Coplan, 2004, p. 144) Coplan (2004), in this context, again emphasises the “presence of self-other differentiation in empathy” (Coplan, 2004, p. 144) that she described like this before: “[A]lthough I am deeply engaged in what he or she—the target of my empathy—is undergoing, I never lose my separate sense of self. I preserve a representation of myself that is distinct from my representation of the other.” (Coplan, 2004, p. 143)

2) The spectator may be deeply touched, profoundly shaken and troubled by the deficient childcare and provision of the depicted mentally and physically disabled orphans in the TV documentary *Bulgaria’s Abandoned Children* (2007) when watching their life’s highly emotional portrayal through director Kate Blewett’s nine-month stay and reporting at a remote institute in Mogilino (northern Bulgaria) condensed into, as commented on in the Telegraph, “90 minutes of undiluted horror. Anyone familiar with the Romanian orphanage scandals of the early Nineties will have stared in shocked disbelief that nearly 20 years on[,] precisely the same pattern of appalling cruelty and neglect is being repeated (...).” (O’Donovan, 14th September 2007, p. 1 [archived]).

From the release in 2007, an uproar and outcry of public audiences reacting through the newly generated widespread awareness around the distressing and unsettling topic and the discrete fate of the children entailed considerable political, public and media pressure, donations and concrete actions, ultimately precipitating the closure of the institution in 2009 and relocation of the children into new homes with better fostering and treatment. (e.g. cf. Blewett, October 2009 [online]; Stevens, 12th November 2019 [online])

Many viewers will likely agree that there is a sense of consecutiveness and accumulation of intense sympathetic emotions (spread through countless scenes) for the children depicted throughout the documentary. This understanding can probably be assumed after the above elucidations, even by a reader who has not seen the film.

Instead of carving out and underpinning the above suppositions on sympathy (since sympathy is already a substantial part of the thesis and very obvious within the boundaries of this filmic example), here is a meaningful example of a child and respective scenes that may spark (powerful) empathetic reactions within the viewership.

Didi (18), allegedly lightly autistic, whose mother was unable to manage to live with her, “was able to talk, and had plenty to say, but no one to speak to” (Stevens, 12th November 2019, p. 1 [online]), as many of the children in the Mogilino institution

did not speak (as they were, e.g. mute, deaf). As pictured in the film, Didi nevertheless writes to her mother frequently and sadly does not receive any answers. The circumstance is conveyed in a very moving and downright upsetting way. Thus, it should be pretty easy for many viewers to (imaginatively) psychologically put themselves in Didi's place in some way (e.g. cf. "role-taking"/"perspective-taking" in empathy, Coplan, 2004, p. 144) since many of them will have had their own experiences of rejection or being unwanted, a lack of responses, separation from or absence/death of loved ones or the like.

Alongside this, viewers may experience repeated empathetic reactions towards other children in the film. More examples should (as well as the whole film) undoubtedly be explored holistically, as already recommended.

Further insights on achieving and improving empathetic reactions like those enumerated and touched upon above in "altruistic filmmaking" through responsible, genuine, socially acceptable, compassionate and ethical captures, compositions, stylistic devices, techniques, narration, and montage would be valuable for the "altruistic filmmaker" toolbox and framework and are a worthy consideration for future extended research in the field.

Chapter Five – Literature

5.1. Video Activism (since the late 1980s) in Hybrid Documentary Filmmaking

Closest to scientific research on "altruistic filmmaking" is the discourse and critique about methods and manifestations of the adjacent "video activism" (e.g. cf. Cizek, 2006; Zimmermann, 2009; Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015; Hoffmann, 2019), the ongoing journalistic-scientific discussion about war and crisis zone (electronic) newsgathering (ENG), embedded journalism (and documentation) (e.g. cf. Schwarte, 2007), possibly special documentary forms from the perspective of film reception and (de-)constructive audiovisual design (especially with an artistic-aesthetic eye), and the evolution of all sorts of definable "mixed" or "hybrid" documentary formats such as "docudrama" and "dramatized documentary". (e.g. cf. Hißnauer, 2011; Zimmermann, 2006; Maaß, 2006)

In documentary filmmaking, major changes in the use, distribution, and impact of documentaries and the development of different ways to watch them have brought about the rise of hybrid documentary filmmaking beginning in the 1980s and

subsequently in the 1990s. Manifold documentary sub-formats are described with this generic term. (Hißnauer, 2011; Zimmermann, 2006)

The segment below will delineate the current body of knowledge of the multi-faceted term “video activism”, which is relevant to this research project, and elaborate on how “altruistic filmmaking” relates to it.

“Video activism” as a phenomenon is localised within the broader field of mixed or hybrid documentary filmmaking (from a film studies perspective; e.g. Zimmermann & Hoffmann, 2006; Askanus, 2013; Hoffmann, 2019). It is also discussed and evaluated in the field of “social movement” media research (e.g. Askanus, 2012a, 2014, 2019; Coskan, 2016; Doerr, Mattoni & Teune, 2013; Mattoni & Teune, 2014) and practice-oriented works (e.g. Harding, 2001; Gregory et al., 2005; also, cf. *Going Public: The Art of Participatory Practice*, Miller, Little & S. High, 2017, specifically referencing interviews with activist filmmakers about their practices). In some of its manifestations, it probably comes the closest to “altruistic & charity filmmaking” and is yet profoundly different in other dimensions.

The following segment seeks to elucidate the way “video activism” has been described and researched, and draw conclusions as to how these findings and modes of scientific research might apply to charity, i.e. “altruistic filmmaking” as well.

In the following section, examples of the umbrella term “video activism” and its facets will be untangled. Furthermore, historical occurrences and illustrative case studies of it will be presented, practices within the notion described, distinguishable factors or manifestations within the term highlighted, and similarities to or differences from “altruistic filmmaking” will be elaborated from the process as a result.

Currently, Askanus (2014) and others circumscribe many items under the auspices of “video activism”. Askanus (2014), who has dedicated a substantial amount of her scientific writing towards this topic, names just a few: “Participatory video, radical video, alternative video, community video, development video, guerrilla video, underground video, advocacy video, DIY video, subversive video, labor video journalism, [and] video for social change (...)” (Askanus, 2014, p. 453).

Some of these may easily be subcategorised with a factor that probably is among the essential differences with “altruistic filmmaking”. They are proclaimed to be part of the two conceptions of “activist media practices” and “citizen media practices”. (Askanus, 2019; also cf. explications of “social movement media practices”, Askanus, 2014) Both describe perspectives about individuals, private citizens, citizen journalists,

and engaged activists that are nowadays more enabled by technical training and make use of technological factors while usually not officially linked to such work as an occupation or representing an institution – especially not in the 1990s and 2000s (Wilson & Serisier, 2010).

While professional documentaries like natural environment-related *The 11th Hour* (2007), transition to renewable energy-related *Catching the Sun* (2015), and food waste-related *Taste the Waste* (2010) would surely meet the criteria or fit the category encompassing “film for social change” or what Askanius (2014) calls “video for social change”, these are made by experts like acclaimed filmmakers Nadia & Leila Connors, Shalini Kantayya and Valentin Thurn. Thus, these films do not fit the description of “citizen media practices” in “video activism” but are nevertheless closely related to or embeddable into “altruistic filmmaking”.

Classic examples for “video activism”, on the other hand, are citizens or activists who created videos for social, environmental or political change. Such examples are the aforementioned *KONY 2012* (2012) by the activist group “Invisible Children, Inc.” and often short viral activist videos for foundations and charities like Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Fridays for Future, Ende Gelände and many others.

Case Study with Details on *Everyday Rebellion* (2013)

A fascinating example that bridges “video activism” and “altruistic filmmaking” artfully is the documentary *Everyday Rebellion* (2013) with its cross-media platform campaign.

Created by award-winning directors, the Riahi Brothers, it incorporates snippets, excerpts and impressions of peaceful activism and creative forms of protest worldwide (AustrianFilms.com – *Everyday Rebellion*, n.d. [online]) into a collage of what could be seen as numerous separate little examples of “video activism”. In its roughly 118 Min. feature version, this potpourri montage of sequences covering Ukrainian “Femen activists”, the “Arab Spring” in Egypt, New York’s “Occupy movement”, the Spanish “Indignados”, and more (EverydayRebellion.net – *The Film*, 2021 [online]) could in celebrating international artistic forms of resistance and awareness-raising be better described as a blended example of “altruistic filmmaking” that chronicles and rejoices “(video) activism”.

The online multimedia campaign website (EverydayRebellion.net, 2021 [online]) still offers advice such as “Protest Tips”, “Methods”, educational content, use cases and applications of nonviolent activism. It further facilitates donations and previously enabled engagement through upload and share options: “Everyday Rebellion gathers

and curates videos, images and articles about creative and modern methods of nonviolent resistance.” (EverydayRebellion.net – Take Part, 2021, p. 1 [online])

The driving forces behind “video activism” and “altruistic filmmaking” are similar. Technological factors range from small cameras and gear, through one-man-show camera operation, to all sorts of other changes in the way video content is acquired faster, more comfortably, and much cheaper nowadays (e.g. cf. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; technology had a similar impact on “embedded journalists” who could be reporter, editor and camera operator simultaneously, cf. Schwarte, 2007). Wilson & Serisier (2010) already described the so-called “ubiquitous citizen journalist” (Wilson & Serisier, 2010, p. 175) and “[t]he move from dedicated video activist to a situation where everyone is a video activist” (Wilson & Serisier, 2010, p. 176) through those means of technological empowerment.

The paragraph above highlights several fundamentally different dimensions in “video activism” from that of “altruistic filmmaking”. One aspect is the quality and complexity of the videos produced. Further quite crucial elements are the questions that arise regarding who creates the video content in the first place and who orders, pays for or nourishes the productions.

The aforementioned presents itself within the following subsumed dichotomy. “Video activism” is primarily driven by private individuals and often political or environmental activists.

A pioneering collection of examples of such “video activism” in brief clips (of typically ca. 1 Min.) is the Australian educational, competition and event platform “Videos for Change” (VideosforChange.org, 2021 [online]). Together with their corresponding YouTube channel, it educates and empowers young non-professionals, i.e. students 13 - 18 of age in their communities and backed-up through teaching environments, “to raise their voices and drive social change” (YouTube.com – Videos for Change, 2021, p. 1 [online]). “Whether it be bullying, racism, violence, inequity or discrimination, Videos for Change is a platform for youth to **contribute their voice** and build confidence, skills, and impact, through short, shareable videos.” (VideosforChange.org, 2021, p. 1 [online]) This type of video also conforms to the definition Cizek (2005) categorised in her chapter on “Storytelling for Advocacy” in Gregory et al. (2005) as “[p]ublic service announcements: These are short, punchy, to-the-point videos that ‘advertise’ your advocacy issue.” (Cizek, 2005, p. 91)

Additionally, citizens cover events, news or mobilize their peers and others through self-made video content of various durations and in several manifestations as

part of this social movement media. (Askanius, 2014, 2019; Doerr, Mattoni & Teune, 2013; Mattoni & Teune, 2014)

“Altruistic filmmaking”, on the other hand, is typically expertly and sophisticatedly designed artistic craftsmanship (i.e. artisanry) produced by filmmakers, socially-engaged journalists and professionals. They are usually funded by, working for or creating content in-line with, in partnership with or inspired by foundations, service clubs, associations or non-governmental organizations, as will be argued in more detail in this study. Conclusively this is among the most notable differences between both phenomena.

While the parties concerned in both phenomena may be different, the aims may well be overlapping, or the neighbourhood of those aims might be discernible. Research and publications in this area have described advocacy, political or social intervention, activism for human rights, social or political changes, and social justice, among others, as aims of “video activism”. (e.g. cf. Cizek, 2005; Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015; also cf. several more chapters in Gregory et al., 2005) These aims also strongly correlate with those of “altruistic filmmaking” as case studies, examples and explanations throughout the thesis precisely depict.

In this context, Mateos & Gaona (2015) describe the practical application of “video activism” to not only limit itself to protest. They circumscribe it “also includes other objectives such as education, the construction of a collective identity, social rebellion and denunciation, demonstration, meeting and bearing witness, all within the broader aim of promoting social change.” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, p. 2) Some of these goals, like educational purposes, construction of a collective identity (or weaker expressions of the same approach) and the broader aim of promoting social change and using witnesses’ accounts to document and give a voice to minorities, for example, overlap with the objectives of “altruistic filmmaking”.

The approach of “video activism” is frequently much more radical and uncontrolled, though, for which various examples provide evidence. (e.g. cf. Askanius & Uldam, 2011; Askanius, 2012a/b) It also lacks the weighted and pro-socially driven ideas to help other human beings with the concepts of mutuality and philanthropy as an ethical background. Still, the conceptions behind “altruistic films” are also often based upon the construction of an “emancipatory consciousness” (cf. Mateos & Gaona, 2015) that has been described as among the aims “of discursive strategies deployed by video activism” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, p. 2).

This “emancipatory consciousness (...) equips people with the tools necessary to resist political manipulation, symbolic domination or cultural subjugation.” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, p. 2) While this applies to “video activism”, in “altruistic filmmaking”, the

broader public is not directly empowered with the tools. Instead, the documentarian as an intermediate mediates, evaluates and journalistically or documentarily investigates or researches the content. He then also holds the means to accumulate, select, arrange and consolidate the footage.

Its final form – a documentary film – might ultimately help people to resist any cultural, political, social or economic restraints, manipulations, authorities and oppressions as discussed very similarly (Mateos & Gaona, 2015) for “video activism” before.

Practical Example and Relationship to the RFPD Documentary

It is worth noting that the RFPD documentary created for this PhD project espouses and propagates the notion of “emancipatory consciousness” (cf. Mateos & Gaona, 2015) on multiple diversified layers with a slightly different interpretation. Some layers were selected, curated and orchestrated intentionally, and some were incorporated inside the charity project long ere filming ever started.

“Awareness-raising” as a fundamental component is always a means for “altruistic filmmaking”. However, such acquired awareness of the recipients or audience is not the final intention. Knowledge, insights or recognition of circumstances are only ever valuable to an activist’s target if they result in development or action. Thus, “awareness-raising” invariably demands attaining progress in “empowerment” or “emancipation” of the recipients in return for the vehemence put into creating said awareness.

Creating competence, shaping proficiency, and thus qualifying stakeholders is likewise at the heart and soul of the “comprehensive approach” of RFPD when integrating their Maternal & Child Health project into the Nigerian Health System. As reiterated in the film, this leitmotif of RFPD comprises teaching midwives, training doctors, and fostering all affiliated parties.

A great example of nurturing “emancipatory consciousness” (cf. Mateos & Gaona, 2015) through the film and its speakers is an excerpt by Obiora Ike (cf. RFPD documentary, TC⁹ 18:08 - 18:25 Min.):

“You have to teach them that every sexual activity can lead to a child. Therefore you must take care. You must teach them natural family planning. You must teach

⁹ abbr. “TC” = time code

them all other family plannings that exist so that they are in a position to make a choice.”

Another critical ingredient to “empowerment” and “emancipation” is educating people. That is why there are sequences about community dialogues in the film. In addition, there is an emphatic and momentous section about the importance of “child education” and “sex education”, explicated by Hadiza Galadanci and Adedolapo Lufadeju (cf. RFPD documentary, TC 17:28 - 17:57 Min.) that then transitions to the speech above by Ike.

But education, empowerment and emancipation are needed in all levels of society, as Brian-D. Adinma of The Society of Gynaecology & Obstetrics of Nigeria (SOGON) states in the film (cf. RFPD documentary, TC 12:23 - 12:36 Min.):

“If we are able to build the capacity of healthcare givers towards delivering healthcare that is of global standards, then we are going to achieve a lot.”

So all of these encouraging efforts rely heavily on the philosophy of “helping people help themselves”, which drives progress through this interpretation of “emancipatory consciousness” (cf. Mateos & Gaona, 2015) and is probably ingrained into the nucleus of all development aid.

As two significant examples (although organisations are revising the wording of their mission statements from time to time), “[t]he World Bank, the leading multilateral development agency, begins its mission statement with a dedication to helping people help themselves, and Oxfam, a leading nongovernmental organization (NGO) working on development, states that its ‘main aim is to help people to help themselves.’” (Ellerman, 2009, p. 1)

Overall, the “comprehensive approach” of RFPD depicted at the heart of the RFPD documentary leans on the essential idea of making the activists redundant through emancipation and empowerment of the people over time.

In a logical progression of the prementioned theoretical considerations and above examples from professional practice, the following description applies to “altruistic filmmaking”, just without the motif of “taking possession”, which should be replaced by the described concept of the “altruistic filmmaker” as an intermediary. The phenomenon of “video activism is an audiovisual mode of communicative action that consists in *taking possession of discourse itself* from the public sphere (*occupying it by means of an audiovisual narrative*) with the aim of fighting against repressions of a

symbolic nature that have biopolitical repercussions on the individual.” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, pp. 2-3)

While “video activism” often appears to spawn as a reaction, counterpower or countermovement to events, activities or repercussions from the realm of social or political environments (e.g. cf. Mateos & Gaona, 2015; also, e.g. cf. “Countervideoing”, Harding, 2001, pp. 86-89), “altruistic filmmaking” goes even further in this dimension. This last statement signifies it is not only reactive as a countermovement but also much more proactive and seeks to initiate or promote positive developments while usually also incorporating a more multi-faceted, nuanced, and eclectic worldview on developing situations.

Here are two examples that are taken from the suggested taxonomy that Askanius (2013) composed of the five types of manifestations of “video activism”. According to her (Askanius, 2013, p. 5), these five are the “mobilisation video”, “witness video”, “documentation video”, “archived radical video”, and “political mash-up video”.

1) “‘mobilization videos’ (videos explicitly calling for, and providing directions for, action distributed prior to protests and direct actions)” (Askanius, 2014, p. 462)

2) “‘witness video’ (videos documenting and creating a narrative around the exhibition of unjust conditions or political wrongdoings/doers, police brutality or human rights violations)” (Askanius, 2014, p. 462).

“Altruistic films” arguably also incorporate the documenting and presenting of all sorts of inequality, unfairness, brutality and forms of (animal) or human rights violations, among various additional subjects.

The following examples from practical “video activism” of the 1980s and 1990s to instigate worldwide political change are a testimony to the taxonomy but also pave the way to the ascendancy of “altruistic filmmaking”: “In the Czech Republic, anti-mining campaigners video their actions and then make campaign videos out of the footage. In Tibet, dissidents capture Chinese exploitation of their land and smuggle the tapes out of the country. In Kenya, human rights groups record evidence of torture on video and give the tapes to forensic scientists for further examination. In the UK, anti-road activists video police evicting them from tree-houses and sell the footage to television news.” (Harding, 2001, p. 4)

Here is a short excursion into the case of Greenpeace that marks the starting point of video activism within the “Handicam Revolution”¹⁰ (also known as the “Camcorder Revolution”) (cf. Harding, 2001; Cizek, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; Zimmermann, 2009). It helps to understand the softening of the demarcation line between “video activism” and “altruistic films” concerning specific aspects, as elucidated in the last paragraphs. Through their many efforts and their spearheading activities (e.g. cf. Greenpeace.org – Greenpeace victories, 2014 [archived]), this proves to be a great example of how “video activism” has developed since the 1980s (Harding, 2001) while at least modern forms often somewhat bridge the gap to “altruistic filmmaking” or should be subsumed under the latter term altogether.

Among the very first globally active, organised international NGOs (that started as an activist group in Canada) that founded their whole success and failure on their audacious, habitually perilous and life-endangering actions all around the world – and still does – is Greenpeace. What started as a group of like-minded individuals resulted in a world-spanning organisation. Amongst the outcomes are many achievements where “companies have reconsidered, governments have moved – and the environment has benefited” (Greenpeace.org – History and Successes, 14th September 2009, p. 1 [archived]) as they state themselves succinctly.

Many of their accomplishments may rightfully be attributed to their deeper-than-usual understanding and pioneering work, ahead of their time, of the power of media imagery, especially videography. In her recent Greenpeace.org article “Making History: How Greenpeace Visuals Win Campaigns”, Katie Camosy (13th September 2021 [online]) underlines this notion pointedly: “For the Greenpeace global network, visual content—photos, videos, graphics, and animation—is at the very heart of our campaign strategies”. (Camosy, 13th September 2021, p. 1 [online]) She continues that “[i]n the earliest days of the organization, co-[f]ounder Bob Hunter coined the term ‘mind bomb’ for an image that sends a collective shock through the world[,] leading to action. That is why photographers and video shooters have been core team members since the first Greenpeace action in 1971.” (Camosy, 13th September 2021, p. 1 [online]) So Greenpeace started as a trailblazer way before Sony’s Handycam introduction (cf. MacManus, 24th May 2010 [archived]) in 1985.

This type of effective imagery changed the world and burned pictures into the mind of generations – without intending to evaluate the quality of their work with this statement. Such examples are the incidents and narratives around Shell’s Brent Spar,

¹⁰ Note: In academia, this is often referred to as the “Handicam Revolution” (or “Camcorder Revolution”), although the reference or purported eponym is Sony’s product line called “Handycam” (launched in 1985 with the CCD-M8, cf. MacManus, 24th May 2010 [archived]).

the French's contentious Southern Pacific radioactive tests, and Nestlé's forest-destroying palm oil (Greenpeace.org – Greenpeace victories, 2014 [archived]).

Such examples also represent evidence that “altruistic films” can be a part of mobilising audiences.

Besides those films mentioned earlier in the thesis, another admonitory case of “impactful documentaries” that mobilised audiences and particularly struck the accused corporation is the production *Blackfish* (2013). It led to significant declines in attendance of “SeaWorld” and impactfully reduced their revenue within just the first nine months of 2014 (McCoy, 12th December 2014 [online]). Furthermore, this expostulatory dropped SeaWorld Entertainment's share price by ca. 44% by the end of 2014 in an otherwise highly flourishing time for theme parks, as reported in “The Washington Post” (McCoy, 12th December 2014 [online]). Watching this documentary provides insights into disconcerting and outright appalling malpractices, irresponsible behaviour and calamitous outcomes of keeping Orca whales in confinement for public entertainment purposes in fish tanks and theme parks.

Of course, such exemplars expose before-mentioned abuses in a much more regulations-compliant, socially acceptable and less drastic way than more radical ways of “video activism” (cf. in contrast to “radical video” in e.g. Askanius, 2014). Another well-known example is *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* (2017), which tries to mobilise audiences, especially with summarised titles at the film's end. These provide a guideline and offer specific suggestions on what audiences could do in direct coordination with the filmmakers' intentions and advocacy against “climate change denialism” as a response to watching the film. Nevertheless, they will do so much less plainly reactive, extreme and crude rather usually in much more refined, artful, responsible and well-thought-out ways.

To subsume the findings on the relationship of “altruistic filmmaking” in the neighbourhood of “video activism”, one could conclude the following: Both scientifically described phenomena share some of their direct aims, effects, topics, partial approaches, and media content. However, they are fundamentally different in their modus operandi, their proactive vs reactive quality, often their technical quality and the complexity of their narration (simple vs nuanced and complex), their ethical standards, their concrete practices, their features such as responsibility, artistic forms and levels of intensity.

To put it differently and more accentuated: “Video activism” may occasionally woo or coax people with pressure in their fervently and fiercely pronounced call to action. “Altruistic films” on the other end of the spectrum are instead trying to convince by employing arguing, evaluating or emphasising statements that equally lead to positive actions of the audience.

Finally, it is worthwhile noting that “[o]ver the past decades, digital video has become ubiquitous to the extent that it has fundamentally changed practices of political protest, activism, and social movements (Eder & Klonk, 2016)” (Askanius, 2019, p. 136). These are all elements of “altruistic filmmaking”.

One key aspect of this research is distinguishing “video activism” from “altruistic film” with respect to aspects of multi-layeredness, complexity and nuance (or lack thereof) and convincing arguments vs pressurised persuasion:

Since (documentary) filmmaking is an art form and not as concretely describable and incontrovertible as theorems in mathematics or axioms in sciences in general, the following description aims to provide deeper insights and establish its validity in terms of spectra rather than concrete numbers like 0 and 1 or simple Boolean terms of “true” and “false”. Accordingly, the ensuing compilation constitutes presumably incomplete guidance for individual consideration and assessment with potential outcomes and not a conclusive, exhaustive or irrevocable description without possible deviations.

When conducting a film analysis, the viewer (i.e. researcher) can evaluate or determine specific characteristics or repetitions across all design factors of the artwork (e.g. narration, screen characters, image composition, proxemics, language, sound effects, music).

Ticking boxes or pinpointing some particular identifiable characteristics on spectra that arise, evolve notably or become dominant (i.e. prevailing or extreme) in any of those design areas will move the description needle away from “altruistic film”. Note that such distinctions will not automatically constitute “video activism” instead.

Examples that reduce or oppose multi-layeredness, complexity and nuance include:

- (Inherent/pervasive) closed-mindedness in narration or of character action/behaviour
- The impression of being force-fed singular standpoints (i.e. the lack of diverse viewpoints/perspectives or more detailed elaborations from various experts) or misled or pressured into one-dimensional thinking (e.g. through manipulative chain questions)

- The (pressurised) presentation of one-sided voices (e.g. not offering voices of people from different cultural, social, political or educational backgrounds)
- The lack of contrarian, diversified or layered views
- The prevailing employment of coercive lopsided, or unilateral logic in narration (e.g. with preeminent use of “false dilemmas”/“false dichotomies”, e.g. cf. Slick, 2008, p. 1 [online])
- (Massive) unjustified exaggerations or extremes without clearly discernible and profoundly substantiated positive intent.

Since “video activism” is a broad field in and of itself and several of its manifestations also often lack multi-layeredness, as elucidated earlier, determining factors such as the examples above may increase the likelihood (among various other indicators described in the thesis) that the film is an example of “video activism” (such as variations or appearances of “radical video” in, e.g. Askanius, 2012a, 2014) rather than an example of “altruistic film”. More importantly, in other cases, the above guidelines only indicate that it is not an “altruistic documentary”. In such cases, this does not automatically denote variants of “video activism” but must invariably be examined case-by-case and comprehensively by taking into account converging evidence from different lines of inquiry.

Examples that oppose or contradict altruistic films’ intention to exercise convincing arguments or offer complex explanations include:

- Continuous and extensive or abusive appeal to biases (i.e. the intentional and likely malevolent exploitation of biases).
- The lack of adherence to altruistic standards and principles of prosocial behaviour when trying to persuade viewers, as elucidated in section “1. 1. Variants of ‘Altruism’ in this Thesis”.
- Stark or (pre-)dominant unscientific or blatant fallacious argumentation (e.g. extensive prevailing logical fallacies): e.g. that the audience has to accept a “special pleading” (e.g. cf. Slick, 2008, p. 1 [online]; Damer, 2013) by exerting a “double standard” (e.g. cf. Slick, 2008, p. 1 [online]) or that there is frequent use of “straw man” arguments (e.g. cf. Slick, 2008, p. 1 [online]; Damer, 2013), “arguing from ignorance” (e.g. cf. Damer, 2013), or the “ad populum” fallacy (e.g. cf. The Writing Center – UNC – Fallacies, n.d., p. 1 [online]).
- Widespread occurrence of errors of reasoning in terms of conspiratorial thinking.

In summation, the indicators above are examples that might help further discern “altruistic film” from other documentary forms in terms of their multi-layeredness, complexity and nuance.

Comparing these deliberations to my practical artistic project about “Maternal & Child Health” in Nigeria, I have incorporated and demonstrated many of the positive declarations above (or inverse variations of the negatives, where applicable) as guidelines into the film creation process.

Some examples of what the film does not do but at times occurs in “video activism”:

The RFPD film intentionally avoids conflicting content on many layers and oversimplifications that are usually a methodology to coax or mislead. In addition, the film also refuses to use exaggerated radical imagery or wording and blatant, unilateral, dogmatic or demagogic approaches. There is also no place for artificially inflated techniques or intentional prevarication.

Unfortunately, some of the techniques listed above are sometimes part of “video activism” because it is typically easier to sway, utilise trickery or prepossess someone than to convince with elaborate replicable compelling arguments.

Some examples of what the RFPD documentary does in coherence with the actionable insights on “altruistic filmmaking” above:

The film intentionally permits and dedicates talk time and overall airtime to people of different nationalities, from various social, financial, religious and intellectual backgrounds, women and men alike, experts from different professions (such as midwives, nurses, and professors or doctors for management, gynaecology and obstetrics, ethics, mathematics/statistics, agriculture and medicine), children, patients, traditional rulers, mere mortals/ordinary citizens and other stakeholders.

The documentary even risks being declared too nuanced, extensive or multi-layered for the sake of exercising convincing arguments, complex explanations of methodology and illustrating a comprehensive approach supported by scientists who created the “Maternal & Child Health” project in the first place.

I have deliberately adopted this strategy even though all filmmaking, including the one exercised in this film, needs to cut, select, arrange, simplify, focus and magnify in some sense, of course. In addition, I also gladly acknowledge that this film is unquestionably not a representation of reality but endeavours to convince, emotionalise and inspire with ethical, social, thoughtful and philanthropic intentions in mind.

The multi-layeredness and complexity of the RFPD film may require additional insights about who and what this film represents in particular and who the target audience could be more specifically (differentiating on a scale from likely to potential audiences). This discernment elaborates on my earlier explications about target groups more broadly and their distinctions (see, e.g. in section 1. 4.).

The following line of argument can also be understood as a thought experiment that discusses the likely, reasonable and possible options, as the film has not been published before the completion of the doctoral process.

Firstly, the film was created by me, a Rotarian and long-standing advisory board member of one of many Rotarian Action Groups, but in this case, a still far-reaching, large-scale, old and noticeable Action Group formerly known as RFPD, currently named RMCH. The film's narrative is about RFPD's "comprehensive approach", depicting their issues and needs and asking audiences for specific support (e.g. donations, creation of satellite projects, requesting volunteer work).

Thus it is clear that this particular film will likely best appeal, most probably reach or most reasonably be forwarded or otherwise spread among members of RFPD/RMCH (ca. 8.600 members in Germany alone, cf. Rotary-RMCH.de – Home, n.d. [online]; first and innermost circle of possible audiences), Rotarians worldwide (over 1.4 million members in > 200 countries/territories and headquartered in the US, e.g. cf. Schütt, 1st February 2022 [online]; with English as their primary globally accepted language), associated international organisations or sub-organisations such as Rotaract (typically for young adults 18+, e.g. cf. Rotary.org – Get Involved – Rotary-Clubs, n.d. [online]), and less likely Interact (typically for ages 12-18, *ibid.*). Closely tied and adjacent organisations such as Inner Wheel (over 100.000 members in > 100 countries, e.g. cf. InnerWheel.de – Home, n.d. [online]) that, like Rotaractors, already profoundly support RFPD should also be mentioned in this regard.

Since Rotary International has additional programmes and partners or otherwise related organisations, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and countless others (cf. Rotary.org – About Rotary – Partnerships, n.d. [online]), and since the RFPD project has numerous confederates of their own (e.g. WHO, Population Council, SOGON, FIGO, BMZ), such as those mentioned or depicted by the film, it is possible, desirable and would undoubtedly be helpful, if the film reached people already associated with similar causes (like proponents of similar, comparable or affiliated organisations).

Such propagation via disseminators is possible or even likely, as various Rotarians hold other memberships of associated organisations and are otherwise very well connected through their professional relationships or private charitable engagement. Additionally, many Rotarians hold influential positions in politics, academia or the private or public sector that enable them to function as thought leaders, opinion leaders or propagators.

All of the above, of course, tightly aligns with my broader rationales of section 1. 4. (and others). Although attracting even more potential donors, volunteers, and patrons would be desirable (e.g. people who love to support women's and children's causes, or have been donors of similar groups and associations in the past, or would like to add value to the project and are yet associated with none of the listed entities above), those are probably more difficult to reach and would fall in an outer circle of the more broadly described target audiences.

It should perhaps be contextualised that Rotary International, founded in 1905, is the oldest service club society in the world (e.g. cf. Schütt, 1st February 2022 [online]), which has also historically provided extraordinary amounts of donations and decades of unflinching and unremitting efforts and aid for projects with counterparts in many different countries through its network, including, to pick just one example, "End Polio Now", which Rotary has supported to date with approximately 2.1 billion US dollars (cf. Rotary.org – Our Causes – Ending Polio, n.d. [online]).

Members of the above more specific and likely assumed target groups, especially those of RFPD, Rotary, Inner Wheel, etc., typically hold academic degrees, are business people or have a white collar (high-brow) background and successful career, are financially well off and both well-acquainted with repeated donation requests and further willing and able to donate and typically recurrently do so with significant sums.

Based on my line of reasoning, such audiences should have few or no problems thoroughly apprehending the multi-layeredness and following the complexity of the film, as they are regularly exposed (usually at least weekly or bi-weekly in their respective clubs) to less visual and more complex (in-person/online) talks and speeches about varying topics and (e.g. academic/business) fields that will habitually end by also requesting donations, volunteering or other charitable action, just like the film. These audiences also typically already have background knowledge about Rotary, Action Groups, etc. and should thus far more easily immerse themselves into the documentary since they already feel "allegiance" (cf. Smith, 2004) through their shared background as Rotarians and may even be acquainted with subjects depicted in the

film, as they are in some cases prominent figures within Rotary and beyond. The “similarity-attraction effect” (e.g. cf. Karremans & Finkenauer, 2021; also see section 4.1.) here is presumably considerably more potent than for other target groups.

As corroborating evidence from personal experience as a Rotarian for more than ten years, having attended (and organised) hundreds of presentations, speeches, and meetings in several countries, I would further accentuate that such audiences have typically requested more complex, nuanced, detailed and sophisticated content, usually sparking in-depth discussions that corresponded to their (perceived) intelligence or led to an intellectual examination of a complex subject.

5.2. Critical Intervention with Social Reality

Modern “video activism” was first and foremost carried out by NGOs like Greenpeace and, for example, civil society activists, citizen journalists and others through the “Camcorder Revolution” (especially from the late 1980s) (e.g. cf. Harding, 2001; Cizek, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009¹¹; Zimmermann, 2009; Camosy, 13th September 2021 [online]).

This process led to the culmination of charity, welfare, goodwill, beneficial, philanthropic, socially and culturally relevant documentary work coined in this study as “altruistic filmmaking”. These films are usually created for, about or by foundations, social or service clubs, associations, non-governmental organisations, philanthropists or socially committed journalists.

Available online collections of charity films (which sometimes are only attention-grabbing commercials for social issues, unlike the richer definition in this thesis), advocacy videos or, for example, forms of environmental documentaries can bolster this assertion (e.g. cf. “Top Ten Successful Charity Videos” by Jeffs, 18th March 2015 [online]; “12 Nonprofit Videos that Spark Inspiration and Action” by Bloch, n.d. [online]; FilmsForAction.org – Home, n.d. [online]).

Another field often closely related to “charity filmmaking” or overlapping in some sense but usually not referred to as such is the work of freelance (investigative) journalists, (TV) reporters, documentary filmmakers, camera operators and producers in war and crisis-stricken zones (work categories collected from the section “Who[m] We’ve Helped”¹² at The Rory Peck Trust – Our Impact, n.d. [online]).

¹¹ Götzke & Knüppel (2009), in this context, e.g. cover the technological evolution around the Handycam, video amateurs, DV technology and multiple types of stakeholders like NGOs utilising said technology for their respective purposes.

¹² Note: The section name has a typing error on the website, as indicated by the square brackets.

The Rory Peck Trust, based out of London, “believe[s] that freelancers play an important and integral role within newsgathering and see the Trust’s role in protecting and supporting them as a practical and significant contribution to independent journalism and the free flow of information.” (The Rory Peck Trust – About Us, n.d., p.1 [online])

The organisation “is co-founder of the Journalists in Distress (JID) network, a group of 18 like-minded organisations that provide support to journalists whose lives or careers are threatened because of their work.” (The Rory Peck Trust – About Us, n.d., p.1 [online])

Such freelancers typically risk their lives daily, covering news and events (ENG = Electronic News Gathering) or reporting and creating documentaries from war or crisis-stricken zones worldwide. Examples are from Syria, South Sudan, Rwanda, Belarus, Afghanistan, and Somalia, which the “Who[m] We’ve Helped” page section (The Rory Peck Trust – Our Impact, n.d. [online]) of the trust vividly portrays.

Thus, it makes sense to argue that such documentarians advance press freedom and promote democracy and independent reporting, among other precious ethical values and intentions. Besides, they are not alone in their commendable endeavours. The Rory Peck Trust connects with many international collaborators, JID network members, and partner organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders, Freedom House, and the International Federation of Journalists (The Rory Peck Trust – Our Partners, n.d. [online]).

Freelancers are risking their lives to freely cover and document news or create documentaries while reporting from war and crisis zones worldwide as described by authors such as Schwarte (2007) in *Embedded Journalists*, Junger (2010), Rados (2003), Reichelt (2010) in *War Reporter* [translated by the author] and others. It is thus reasonable to argue that such activities are connected to and intertwined with “charity filmmaking” as circumscribed in this study. A more nuanced discussion with more arguments and details follows later in the thesis.

Apart from the broad public that can benefit from multiple representations of “video activism”, crisis and war journalism and documentaries, several specific groups benefit from “charity filmmaking”, as this thesis intends to highlight.

These could be cultural, social and beneficial international, national and supra-national (Non-)Government Organisations and other welfare activist organisational structures worldwide.

More examples could further be the United Nations (with all its divisions/institutions), ecological, economic or otherwise specialised organisations/charities such as Amnesty International, Misereor, World Vision, and also service clubs like Lions Clubs International, Round Table International, Zonta International or Rotary International with its subdivisions such as its biggest action group, the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health (RMCH) – formerly RFPD. The latter is, of course, the beneficiary of the altruistic documentary *Rotary Action for Maternal & Child Health* created as part of this PhD project.

All of the examples and fields, as mentioned earlier, are typically part of a critical intervention with social reality and thus dedicated to impacting its audiences, stakeholders, or the real-life experiences on-site. Numerous forms of such interventions with social reality and effecting change have been elucidated about the academic research of “video activism” in the section above.

As previous examples suggest, there are also many angles on the relationship between such “social impact” (or “social change”; and “intervention in social reality”, etc.) and “spectatorship” for any form of documentary and different ways to explore them. Such viewpoints include but exceed the following:

1. The filmmaker interferes with the social reality intended to capture and thus may impact the film and the social environment of what is being filmed. The result then perhaps affects what the spectator perceives, understands and gains from watching the documentary.
2. The film possibly affects audiences that, through their resulting behaviour or actions, create a “social impact” in their local communities, regions or countries or for the film’s targets.
3. The film could affect viewers by changing their opinions/views, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, which might affect viewers’ lives.

Tanya Notley, Andrew Lowenthal and Sam Gregory (2015), in their related working paper “Video for Change: Creating and Measuring Social Impact”, for instance, offer an insightful compilation in their “Table 1: Video for Change Genealogy” (Notley, Lowenthal & S. Gregory, 2015, pp. 6-7) of differing practices describing their “[c]ore values, focus and functions” (ibid., p. 6). In short, these include but greatly exceed “Participatory, Grassroots and Community Video” (ibid., p. 6), which, e.g. “[f]ocuses on addressing social inequalities and supporting marginalised groups to tell their own stories” (ibid., p. 6), or “Video Advocacy” (ibid., p. 6), which, e.g. “[f]ocused on

addressing specific and targeted law, policy or practice change or influencing a particular event/ongoing situation” (ibid., p. 6), or “Video Archiving” (ibid., p. 7), which e.g. “[f]ocuses on documentation and preservation of events and histories that may otherwise be ignored or forgotten” (ibid., p. 7). All these functions and foci eventually subsume as examples of manifestations, variations or facets of “social impact”.

The illustrations above (and others below) clearly accentuate various dimensions and aspects to consider when creating documentary films – such as “altruistic films” – that may entail manifestations of “social impact” or “social change”. These include the “specificity” of the target focus (e.g. “broad” <=> “tight”, “singular” <=> “multiple”, “unimodal” <=> “multimodal”), the “production process stage” that begets effects, the “dimension” or “reach” of the possible impact, the “private”, “public” or “other” spheres of what is being affected, the “social groups” and “target groups” involved/impacted, possible (un)intended “side-effects to consider” and many more. These dimensions and further elaboration are just an excerpt of possible perspectives on “social impact” and “spectatorship” in documentary filmmaking.

Following are some deliberations on how mentioned examples interrelate specifically with my professional practice and “altruistic filmmaking” more broadly. The considerations also emphasise how NGOs’ objectives and “altruistic filmmaking’s” topics interrelate, both of which comprise numerous examples of intended or resultant forms of “social impact” or “social change”.

As indicated, the findings of this section certainly reverberate across the RFPD film as practical examples for incorporating critical intervention with social reality at various levels. Examples of this are that the production process was much like the embedded freelance journalistic work and additionally happened in dangerous conditions in poor rural areas of Nigeria. Furthermore, the RFPD documentary also interacts with social reality since the beneficiary is a nonprofit, which by itself already impacts society in a far-reaching and sustainable way. Its film production process offers an additional form of interaction with the reality of social life since formative technical possibilities like simultaneously producing, directing, filming, and recording audio already affects the very process of making it.

One of the specialities is that the film is a long-term project from 2013 - 2021 that documents the progress of the charitable work and its results of integrating the model and schematics of the Maternal & Child Health project into the Nigerian Health System, among other things. In this way, the film depicts a direct evolution or transition of external intervention through charitable support to a self-sustained government-backed process.

In addition, the whole artistic approach also reflects critical intervention with social reality. It focuses on interacting with the people portrayed and thereby intervening with their social reality on several layers. Most prominently to highlight are the mothers and children in postnatal care, the dancing scenes or community dialogue scenes where women, men and children react to and interact with my camera work that changed their social reality of the moment.

This study argues that “altruistic filmmaking” comprises a wide range of topics as collected, systematised and simplified in figure 2 below. A key objective of those documentaries can be subsumed as to critically intervene in objective social reality in some capacity.

Aligned with the issues, obstacles, topics and intentions that NGO’s typically confront, it is comprehensible to argue that respective documentaries probably adopt them from their beneficiaries – the NGO’s.

The latter are regularly involved in the natural environment, conduct fundraising, tackle climate change, contest poverty, warn against resource wastage, foster sustainability, champion democracy vs oppression, engage in the freedom movement, or fight for animals, humans and living creatures alike. They habitually educate about difficulties, challenge the status quo, empower minorities, cover wars, crises and exploitation or highlight deficiencies, abuses and misconduct. Their values and aspirations range from freedom through justice to fairness and equity to humanity.

The suppositions, declarations and estimations in the last paragraph can be easily logically argued and further substantiated by the extensive research corpus on charities and should be abstracted for “altruistic filmmaking”. *The Routledge Companion to Philanthropy* (Jung, Phillips & J. Harrow, 2016) is an instructive starting point that delivers a systematic overview of the topic around charity and philanthropy.

New hybrid forms of documentary filmmaking present themselves in a contemporary style with the possibilities of faster, more accessible, easier, and more versatile solo shooter filmmaking and equipment, technology and production process, as well as a burst in creative visual options for the films (real-time effects, complex colour control functionality, animations and more) as recent academic literature has found. (cf. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; comparable for “video journalism”, cf. Smith, 2011; also cf. Lancaster, 2018) Said authors and others have found these and related advancements for various hybrid forms, video activism/journalism or independent filmmaking, and it is thus reasonable to adapt them for “altruistic filmmaking”. Evidence of exemplary films across the thesis and learnings from the RFPD practice project is coherent with this claim.

Such hybrid documentaries or independent films can be produced incredibly inexpensive, funded in a variety of ways irrespective of traditional film-financing strategies and markets (via various online platforms) and realised without significant experience. Thus, feature film production has become very accessible for film students, aspiring filmmakers and professionals alike. (cf. film production & financing literature: Gaspard, 2006; Davies & Wistreich, 2007; Dean, 2007; Malloy, 2009; Levison, 2009; Zdunnek, 2010) Since “altruistic filmmaking” perfectly fits into the class of hybrid documentaries as elicited before, the argument above is legitimate for it as well.

Ultimately, these sections’ insights also interrelate closely with the RFPD documentary practice project. The stylistic, creative, (post-)production-related, and financial aspects circumscribed for hybrid documentaries and “altruistic filmmaking” in the preceding paragraphs principally reflect considerable portions of the cheap, multi-format, international RFPD documentary I have directed for this thesis. The film’s individual-style one-man-show filmmaking approach in Nigeria and its emotionally charged visual style with animations, charts, and graphs resemble the above theoretical academic distinction criteria.

The broad topic range and intentions of spotlighting deficiencies in the Nigerian Health Care System, supporting and fundraising for a sustainable, comprehensive motherliness and childcare project resemble the colourful bouquet of collected NGO efforts above reasonably. Furthermore, fighting for these human beings in poorer and precarious third-world living conditions featuring crucial areas of education and fundraising for the project concurrently complete the picture.

5.3. Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking”

Figure 2 contributes a simplified topic range of these hybrid documentary formats.

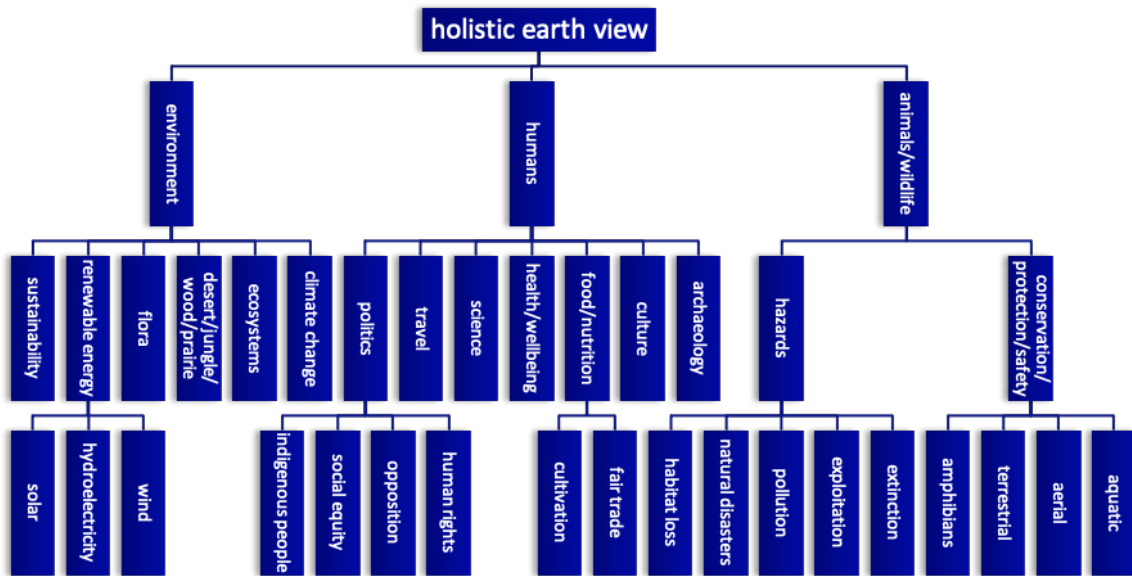


Figure 2: Topic range of hybrid documentary - “altruistic filmmaking” (simplified; inspired by topics and labels of EarthMovies.org – Home (2012 [archived]) and NewEarthFilms.com – About (2022 [online])); adapted, elaborated and systematised)

Figure 3 renders an overview of films that represent this field of pro-active, socially and environmentally concerned hybrid documentaries, apart from many illustrated examples interwoven earlier in the study.

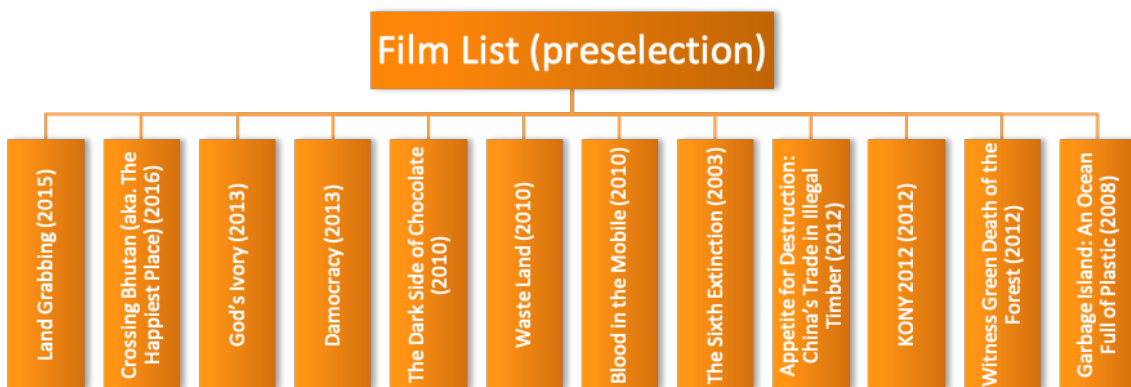


Figure 3: Film list of hybrid documentary - “altruistic filmmaking” (tentative preselection; based on topics and related themes in association with figure 2)

Websites such as FilmsForAction.org – Home (n.d. [online]), FilmsForTheEarth.org – Home (2022 [online]) and others contain lists of comparable or related films. Whether films belong to the classification of “altruistic filmmaking” must be considered systematically and individually.

5.4. Stereotypes, Postcolonial Theory & Representation of “Others”

While the body of literature around the terms in the headline is incredibly vast, this thesis only intends to unveil aspects and insights about “stereotyping”, esp. regarding “otherness” (with respect to “postcolonial theory”) that might have consequential effects on some “altruistic films” (particularly if ethnographic) and outline potential problems that could arise.

Following J. Daniel Elam (15th January 2019 [online]), “[p]ostcolonial theory is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century. Postcolonial theory takes many different shapes and interventions, but all share a fundamental claim: that the world we inhabit is impossible to understand except in relationship to the history of imperialism and colonial rule.” (ibid., p. 1 [online]) As Robert J. C. Young (2020) further clarifies, it “is not in fact a theory in the scientific sense, that is, a coherently elaborated set of principles that can predict the outcome of a given set of phenomena. Nor does it form a structured methodology for the analysis of data, in the manner of the social sciences. It comprises instead a related set of perspectives, which are juxtaposed against one another, sometimes dialectically, that is, in creative opposition, and on occasion contradictorily.” (ibid., p. 9)

While the body of knowledge around this topic is sensitive, extensive and controversial, this thesis will focus on stereotypes that have been identified among critical issues in “postcolonial theory” (e.g. cf. chapter “Stereotypes of the Orient and Orientals”, McLeod, 2010, pp. 41-43; also cf. chapter “‘Ambivalence’ and ‘mimicry’ in colonial discourses”, ibid., pp. 45-49).

As such, postcolonial theory stresses and tries to shed light on (systemic and significant) problems with stereotypes (e.g. cf. McLeod, 2010; Gandhi, 2019) and thus possible stigmatising portrayals of “others”. Here is an example of such inappropriate and unacceptable stereotypical depictions: “The Oriental male was frequently deemed insufficiently ‘manly’ and displayed a luxuriousness and foppishness that made him a grotesque parody of the (itself stereotyped) ‘gentler’ female sex.” (McLeod, 2010, p. 42) Insensitive and intently, especially systematically exploited or abused stereotypes like the above, can clearly have stigmatising effects on “others”. Authors like McLeod (2010), Leela Gandhi (2019), and many others share various examples of this prevalent problem discussed as part of postcolonial theory.

Yet, authors’ theories across the board seem to “differ in whether they explain stereotypes and prejudice in terms of sociocultural causes or in terms of individual processes” (Stroebe & Insko, 1989, p. 12) per se, as, unfortunately, definitions around

“stereotype” (including optional aspects and dimensions) vary significantly: “There are a great variety of theories that account for stereotypes and prejudice on different levels of analysis and in terms of widely differing psychological processes.” (ibid., p. 12) Jörg Schweinitz (2011) agrees “that the term refers to quite heterogeneous phenomena in each respective field.” (ibid., p. 3) To put this into perspective and highlight the relevance of the audience and their role in developing, reacting to or affecting stereotypes, I would like to accentuate an example that Schweinitz (2011) put forth: Franz “Dröge clearly sees the concept of the stereotype as logically situated in attitude research. (...) For Dröge, stereotypes are conceptions about people, groups, nations, and so on—beliefs standardized according to the specific group membership of the individual holding the given notion (autostereotypes and heterostereotypes).” (ibid., pp. 11-12) Thus, the background and group affiliation of the audience or spectators holding/applying the preconceived notions, prejudices, and stereotypes play a substantial role that may only slightly or may not at all be controllable or affectable by the filmmaker, as there exist numerous “theories that conceive of stereotypes and prejudice as the result of social conflict (conflict theories) or socialization (the social learning theory). At the other extreme, there are approaches that account for stereotypes and prejudice in terms of individual motives and personality traits (scapegoat theory, authoritarian personality) or in terms of limitations of the information-processing capacity of the individual (cognitive approach).” (Stroebe & Insko, 1989, pp. 12-13)

While there might be no general agreed-upon stance or consensus within the scientific community about the formation of stereotypes, this even more suggests that any filmmaker should be cognizant and self-reflective and apply ethical values as rigorously as possible within their various constraints, limitations, abilities, and background. Acknowledging these constraints (etc.) myself, it appears valuable to reflect on some aspects of my RFPD film that could relate to stereotypes by some audiences (cf. section 7. 17.) while first and foremost distancing myself from any negative intent, secondly acknowledging limitations and constraints (of time, access, and predetermined structures, processes and dependencies – e.g. travel-related, etc.) and underscoring that there are always wishes for enhancements/optimisations, and thirdly offering openness to feedback for improvement possibilities of my “practice-in-development” project. Trying to be as circumspect as possible, I have indicated potential limitations of the research and practice project and that of (altruistic) filmmaking more broadly at various points across the thesis apart from here (e.g. cf. sections 4. 3., 7. 8., 7. 10., 7. 11., 7. 18., 8. 1., and 9. 1.).

Ultimately, it is clear that some, primarily ethnographic altruistic documentaries or altruistic films, with topics around human living conditions (health/wellbeing, food/nutrition, culture, indigenous people, social equity, human rights, etc.) (cf. section 5.3. Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking” above), may be more prone to problematic forms of stereotypes than others.

Since the genesis of altruistic films largely relies on their creators (esp. their knowledge, background, intentions, checks, etc.), there are several ways in which stereotypes can (un)intentionally and (un)knowingly manifest themselves in such films, both implicitly and explicitly.

By far, not all altruistic documentaries necessarily concentrate on the representation of “others” (i.e. “other” human beings), as there are, e.g. climate, nature, animal, and ecology-centric documentaries that do not centrally focus on (or only negligibly touch upon) portraying human life from specific backgrounds, ethnicity or culture.

Even, for instance, climate-related altruistic films are very different in their style, as the keynote presentation centric *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006) and *Ten Billion* (2015) differ a lot from the travel documentary style and narrative of *Before the Flood* (2016).

It seems to be rational to conclude that prevalent stereotypes of “others” as ways of stigmatising are not a generalisable phenomenon across altruistic films and may or may not play a (meaningful) role in any such film, depending on a case-by-case evaluation, the topics covered by the film, the stance, knowledge, reflection and background of the filmmaker or team and various other influencing factors (including the background/group affiliation/role of the audience, i.e. ultimately the perception of every individual spectator).

While there is no consensus on the origin of stereotypes, myriad factors influence stereotypes and interconnected perceptions, and “race” is an ideological distinction criterion (as explained before), there is a worthy, meaningful, sophisticated and deep general discussion in film theory around the relationship of preexisting “postcolonial” stereotypes, such as the cinematic “white saviour” trope (far too complex to incorporate exhaustively into this thesis, unfortunately), in contextually-related films. One noteworthy example is Hughey’s (2014) book *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption*. Understandably, “[s]cholarship interrogating the diffuse iterations and evolution of the white savior has flourished since the middle of the twentieth century” (Hughey, 2014, p. 11) and continues with contemporary publications such as by Hughey (2014) himself, focussing primarily on Hollywood-type films. He (cf. Hughey, 2014) highlights various issues, critiques and investigation results of (present-

day) variations of the trope across numerous such well-known films. Ultimately, following the logic of Elam's (15th January 2019 [online]) far-reaching statement above, any media project, movie, or documentary that, for example, deals with matters in Africa, such as ethnographic films or "altruistic filmmaking" – even if entirely unintended – will (inevitably) come in contact with or be subject to (parts of) the discourse of contextually arising postcolonial narratives such as the "white saviour" trope and related questions. Consequently, section 7. 17. of the thesis will reflect upon "Stereotyping & Representation of 'Others'" concerning my RFPD documentary.

Chapter Six – Film Analyses & Deconstruction

6. 1. Multi-Step Film Analyses Approach

Film analyses: 14 step approach adapted from Lothar Mikos (2015) (integrated into the research process of this study)
1. Development of general cognitive interest [and in knowledge contribution]
2. Review of the material
3. Theoretical and historical reflection
4. Concretisation of the interest in knowledge
5. Development of the question(s)
6. Narrowing down the material resp. forming the analysis corpus
7. Determination of the tools
8. Data collection
9. Description of the data basis [(primary research: population & sample)]
10. Analysis of the data: Inventory of the components of the films or television programmes
11. Evaluation: Interpretation and contextualisation of the analysed data
12. Evaluation I: Assessment of the analysed and interpreted data
13. Evaluation II: Assessment of own results measured against the interest of knowledge and operationalisation
14. Presentation of results


Figure 4: Film analyses: 14-step approach adapted and refined from Lothar Mikos (2015, pp.74-75) [translated by the author]

Following traditional film analysis theory about which film theorists broadly agree, as Mikos (2015) points out, correctly referring to their numerous earlier studies, the doctoral thesis will *collect/describe* (steps 8, 9), *analyse* (step 10), *interpret/evaluate* (steps 11-13) and *present* (step 14)¹³ the findings of the film analysis conducted.

¹³ Note: Lothar Mikos devised this 14-step approach (see figure 4) as a list and slightly changed its wording in different publications. Compare, e.g., Mikos (2005, p. 461) with Mikos (2015, pp. 74-75) and Mikos (2017, p. 519). The version in this thesis is based on my translation of Mikos (2015, 2017) with

Thereby it will highlight a selection of elements described and discussed in Arijon (1991), Fromm (1999), Kuchenbuch (2005), Hickethier (2007), Götzke & Knüppel (2009), Korte (2010), Faulstich (2013), Mikos (2015) and Blank (2015).

The elements selected for this research will be combined and arranged in layer 1 to 3 to answer all research questions and conceptualise the framework for altruistic filmmaking in catenation with conclusions from theoretical consideration and practice.

- 
- **Layer 1 - Film analyses (deconstruction) - descriptive level**
 - These analyses will incorporate the deconstruction of different recurrent:
 - (1) locations
 - (2) visual repetitions
 - (3) symbolism (as stylistic devices) and metaphors
 - (4) camera concept (e.g. style, perspectives, movements & zoom, picture composition/framing, special features)
 - (5) lighting approach (e.g. indoor, outdoor/daylight, natural)
 - (6) editing/cutting (unique principles of montage)
 - (7) animations, titles, graphs & charts
 - (8) audio: rhetoric, speech, language & cognitive biases

minor adaptation [marked in brackets] to this research's purpose. Please appreciate and consult the version in Mikos (2015, pp. 74-75; explanations from pp. 75-85) or the identical version in Mikos (2017, p. 519).

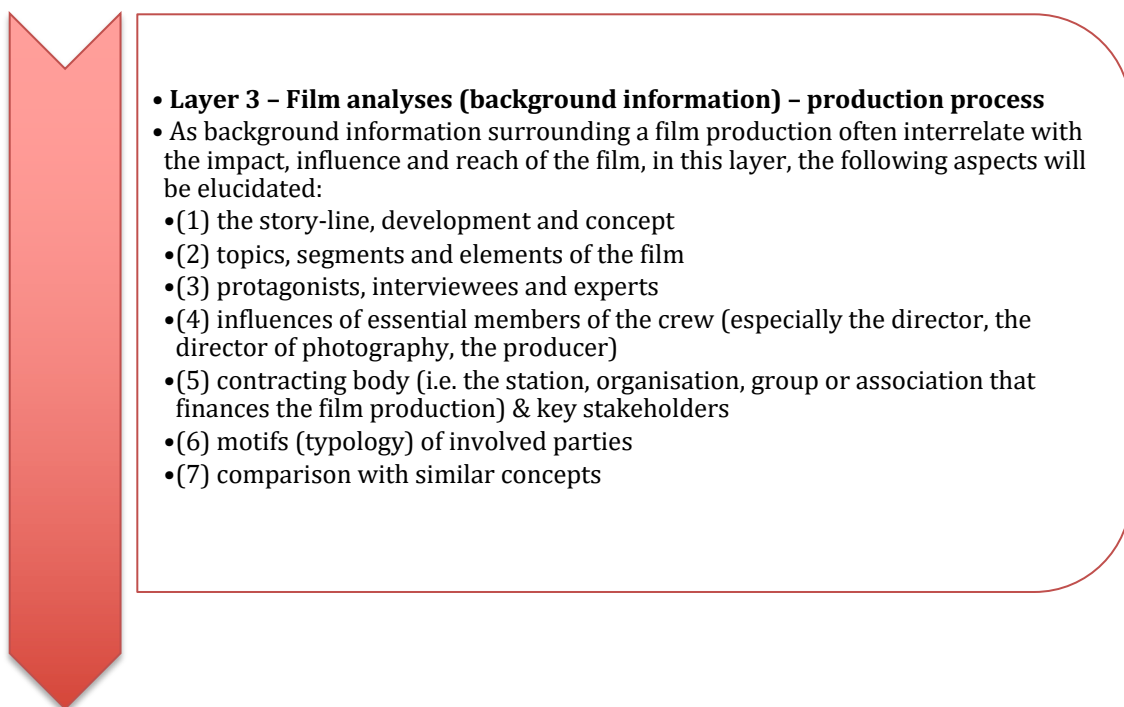
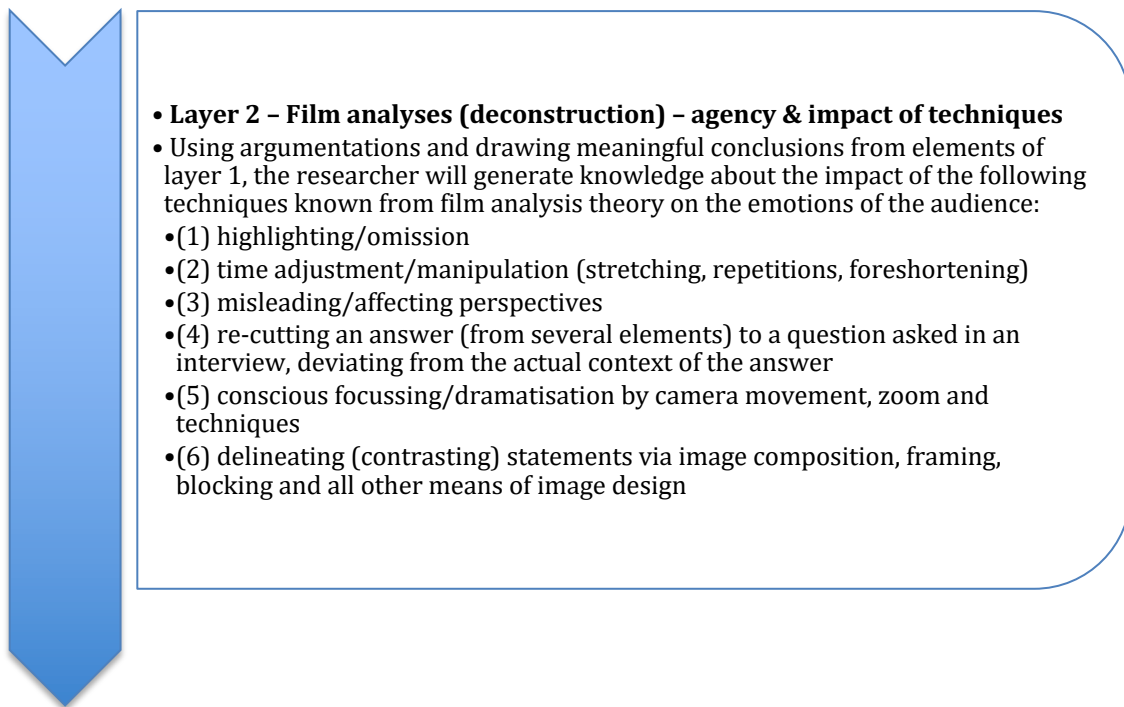


Figure 5: Layer 1 - 3 of film analyses (descriptive level/agency & impact of techniques/production process) (Layer 3¹⁴ based on resp. inspired especially by elements of Fromm, 1999; Lünenborg et al., 2011 and initially related to different types of (hybrid) documentary formats); some of the elements have been added by the author

¹⁴ Note: Reviewing the books of Brunst (2003) and Herrmann & Lünenborg (2001) has possibly also influenced devising this enumeration for Layer 3, even though that might not be obvious.

Insights from film analysis and case examples lie at the centre of the research strategy. They are merged with findings on current *documentary filmmaking practice* of everyday charity filmmaking with aspects of the technology and specialities of production processes, core visuals and film language using representative well-known hallmark examples from recent history.

Case examples like the earlier covered *KONY 2012* (2012), *Everyday Rebellion* (2013), and *The Altruism Revolution* (2015) (*internet & literature*) are investigated spread over several sections of this thesis, especially from the perspective of how sub-elements can be formative for “altruistic filmmaking”.

An exemplary comprehensive film analysis of an award-winning, particularly thought-provoking, influential, and ground-breaking beacon project is that of *Before the Flood* (2016), elaborated as an optional extension in Appendix A – Film Analysis of *Before the Flood* (2016) of this study. This analysis is preceded by insights about the production of the practical project in the following chapter 7. RFPD Film Production & Analysis, including reflections and film analytical discoveries. Of course, the practice project is interwoven into the study with recurring observations and deliberations in many sections.

The analyses and case studies will help to explicate patterns, rule sets, typical audiovisual features (e.g. sound, compaction, cinematography, editing) and their reality-shaping and distortion effects, as well as emphasising and focusing effects. Such are, for instance, implemented in the “relational montage” [translated by the author] (cf. Kuchenbuch, 2005) and the “montage of attractions” [translated] (cf. Eisenstein, 2006) (explained below) or resort to further dramaturgical devices, omissions and deliberative reception control or manipulation. Such techniques are usually deployed to create deliberate individual emotional responses or exercise cleverly devised methods of persuasion.

In addition to that, a framework (compendium) that seeks to explain how to create intense emotions to lead potential donors to donations through the use of technological features, production process components, audiovisual concepts and stylistic devices via charity filmmaking will be proposed. This framework fuses practice-based and theoretical research findings and is thus the thesis’ most critical and central result.

The final chapters will present conclusions and discuss the limitations and implications of the thesis to offer estimates or predictions desirably valuable for other documentary

productions within the research field, wherever the created rule-set and framework applies. Furthermore, an outlook and future research options are presented that arose from this research.

Chapter Seven – RFPD Film Production & Analysis

7. 1. Introduction & Chapter Mapping

As the professional practice part of this project, I directed, filmed and produced a charity documentary for an NGO formerly called RFPD – “Rotarian Action Group for Population and Development” about “Maternal and Child Health” and the cooperation between Rotary Clubs, districts, states and the national health care system of Nigeria. The action group adopted a new name after principal photography and is presently called RMCH – “Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health” accordingly.

Considering that this chapter has many sections, is crucial to the thesis and spans a longer complex arc of analytical inquiry, here is a quick run-down to shed light on this interconnected overview of the chapter and offer the readership a way of clearer understanding the linkages.

The upcoming section, “7. 2. Film Content”, provides a summary of the content (incl. plot/story-line, narration, logical chain), the involved parties/stakeholders, the (desired) propositions and key messages, and the underlying context of the film.

The subsequent “7. 3. Extending Research Objectives through Practice” builds on earlier explications about professional practice and the theoretical approach of the thesis (see, e.g. section 3. 1.) and leads into the self-explanatorily titled segment “7. 4. Aims & Objectives of the Research-Informed RFPD Charity Film” with the “Elements, Components and Techniques” to achieve or approximate these objectives elucidated accordingly in section “7. 5.”.

As the developmental process of my documentary could be described as an iterative-reflective (improvement-oriented) and diaristic theory-practice production, section “7. 6. Construction & Reflection” details its mode, style, integral constructive elements and compositions and conveys my roles, functions and approach.

(De-)constructing and reflecting upon various elements of my production (in line with principles of film analysis, see chapter six above), segment “7. 7.” deals with the “Locations, Places, Travel Elements and Event Coverage” accordingly and continues in

section “7. 8.” by (de-)constructing the “Personal Perspective of the Practitioner and its Foundations in Documentary Film Studies”.

The next section, “7. 9. Part 1: Value Chain, Process & Technology in Travel-Related Documentary”, discusses the development, value chain, work processes and underlying technological factors that make the film possible, leading into the creative process, aesthetics, stylistic features, the relationship with “Direct Cinema” and corresponding representation of the truth and (un)knowable elements of documentary filmmaking, that are further elucidated in “7. 10. Part 2: Stylistic Approach, Representation of the Truth & the ‘Unknown Unknown’ of the Johari Window”. Segment “7. 11. Part 3: Connections with the Multitudinous Hazards of Embedded Journalism, War & Crisis Reporting” then connects (e.g. process-, dangers-, and challenges-related) findings of these correlated fields (as well as insights from the literature review around “video activism” in chapter five above) with “altruistic filmmaking” and my RFPD documentary.

As not only the relationship with the truth (see above) but also with reality (incl. believability, honesty) plays a major role in documentary filmmaking, the following section “7. 12.” on “Interference with Reality” sketches eminent existing literature-based insights from hybrid documentary formats (and reality TV, docu-fiction), outlines my approach regarding altering, arranging, staging or re-enacting scenes and offers a tentative conclusion on imperatives for relevant values in “altruistic filmmaking”.

The subsequent section, “7. 13.” then dissects the key film-analytical elements of “Cinematography, Proxemics and Composition” and leads into an examination of “Patterns, Symbolism and Metaphorical Expressions and their Interrelationships with Emotional Responses and Cognitive Biases” in the successive segment “7. 14.”.

Section “7. 15.” on “Personal Handwriting: Signature Style Shots & Psychological Foundations” then elucidates my individual choices of shots, perspectives and compositions and some of their theoretical and psychological foundations in research around “cuteness” (e.g. cf. Glocker et al., 2009) and the “baby schema” (cf. German: “Kindchenschema”, Lorenz, 1971), as well as highlighting practices of (comparable) international charities.

Segment “7. 16. Experts & Protagonists: Convincing with Authority” builds on and interrelates with findings around “persuasion” and “authority” (e.g. Cialdini, 2007, 2021; e.g. cf. sections 4. 1., 4. 2.) and discourse around “experts” and “protagonists” (e.g. cf. sections 5. 1., 7. 2., 7. 3., 7. 4.) and connects them with the RFPD documentary.

The penultimate section, “7. 17.” provides a reflexive analysis of “Stereotyping & Representation of ‘Others’” and thus builds directly upon previous passages that

broached and elaborated on this subject in section 1. 6. of the introduction and in sub-section 5. 4. of the literature review.

The chapter concludes in section “7. 18.” with abridged suggestions, acknowledgements, excerpts and explanations on the research “Limitations & Future Research” options in extension to those already mentioned throughout the chapter (and in other parts of the thesis).

Insights from earlier methodology- and literature-related chapters, analysis thereof, or comparisons of them with my documentary, are interwoven throughout the chapter, such as concerning Smith’s (1994, 2004) “structure of sympathy” (see, e.g. section 4. 1.), which appears in several sections of this chapter (e.g. 7. 6., 7. 7., 7. 8., 7. 9., 7. 10., 7. 13.).

7. 2. Film Content

Rotary Action for Maternal & Child Health (official film title)

In this film, the rundown health care system, desperate technological conditions of hospitals, poor infrastructure and road conditions, deficient sex education and terrible maternal and infant mortality and morbidity rates in Nigeria are illustrated. The iteratively improved comprehensive approach by RFPD and associates is depicted as a solution to this catastrophic situation.

The comprehensive approach (initially incepted for former projects) (cf. Maternal-Health.org – Comprehensive Approach, 2007 [online]; Maternal-Health.org – Maternal Health Pilot Project, n.d. [online]; Maternal-Health.org – Methodology - Quality Assurance, n.d. [online]) includes activities such as community dialogues, cooperations with numerous spiritual, governmental and provincial stakeholders and representatives, infrastructure and technology-related initiatives, methods to amplify advocacy and public education, and other operational elements.

In tandem with this, the RFPD documentary strikingly portrays pursuits such as professional family planning services, engagement with the Federal Ministry of Health (Nigeria), and cooperation with societies for obstetrics, gynaecology and mother and child care.

Of course, knowledge transfer by the Rotary project, digitisation of data collection and analysis (esp. deaths) and the methodology of quality assurance in obstetrics to ultimately reduce perinatal and maternal morbidity and mortality are conducted by the project and portrayed in the documentary as well. (cf. RIFPD.org –

Strengthening of Health System in Nigeria, n.d. [online]; Maternal-Health.org – Methodology - Quality Assurance, n.d. [online])

The film concludes with expert statements, paraphrased here, that with this comprehensive approach – led by RFPD and stakeholders – mothers will be empowered to give birth securely in well-appointed clinics, which have excellently educated employees. Consequently, families must no longer rely on dangerous home births and will suffer fewer losses or illnesses. The documentary further suggests or entreats all potential benefactors to support and propel this project, whereby the general research objectives are underlined.

The documentary then culminates in captivating, aspirational and evocative remarks that are emotionally and ethically poignant, visually convincingly underpinned, and segue into rousing exuberant elation, captivating musical rendition and exhilaration before transitioning to credits. In this way, the film intends to transport the mesmerising and profoundly moving emotional dynamics into the reality of the audience's lives. Several upcoming sections in this chapter include more details concerning how the film endeavours to elicit these emotional responses.

7.3. Extending Research Objectives through Practice

This practice project is an extension of the study objectives on numerous discrete and intertwined layers.

It served experimental purposes to examine and evaluate “altruistic filmmaking” characteristics, emotional responses, persuasion techniques (to influence, entice, induce or fascinate), and other framework elements.

Additionally, the project resembles the technological, process-related and stylistic background as elucidated in earlier chapters (e.g. single documentarian; small, agile, and compact camera gear; affordable contemporary and profound creative options in post-production; i.e. the transformation of the (hybrid) documentary form through technological possibilities previously described, e.g. by Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009). The film also permitted to traverse approaches, scrutinise effectiveness and explore emotionalising techniques through various iterations and interactions with the feedback of the PhD advisors.

Furthermore, the “comprehensive approach” of RFPD and my film perfectly adhere to the prerequisite charitable nature of “altruistic filmmaking”, including its intention to encourage donations and promote philanthropic actions.

Ultimately, the back-and-forth process of reflections from theory and practice were intertwined and informed each other, as presented regularly across this thesis. A prominent example is the mutually-influenced research into the “baby schema” (“Kindchenschema”, e.g. Lorenz, 1971) and its repetitive utilisation in the film to elicit emotional responses, as detailed in this chapter below.

Another example is the research into principles of “persuasion” (Cialdini, 2007, 2021) such as “authority”, the professors, doctors, midwives as experts in the film that also resemble “commitment” and the “consistency” of the topic presentation overall. More details can be found in segment 7. 16. Experts & Protagonists: Convincing with Authority below.

7.4. Aims & Objectives of the Research-Informed RFPD Charity Film

The research-informed RFPD charity film *Rotary Action for Maternal & Child Health* composed for this study seeks to garner support, donations and funding for the RFPD project by employing “altruistic filmmaking” techniques. It tries to evoke emotions to let people get involved, support and extend the project. Moreover, it informs, poses relevant questions and invokes (in-)direct actions of relevant stakeholders. Its requested support is the creation of additional guided and regulated side projects (so-called “Rotary satellite projects”) or copious other means to broaden the impact in generating funding and international recognition of and reaction to the emphatically stressed topic.

Among the most fundamental questions for any charity film that intends to achieve distinct goals and excel in real-life environments is the question: How does the project subsequently achieve its altruistic goals?

The project uses interviews (of experts and concerned parties; talking heads), diegetic audio (e.g. live-action traditional dances and musical performances), animation (incl. charts, slides, motion graphics, symbols/icons, stills), the below-mentioned imagery, stylistic devices, techniques and results from a particular iterative-reflexive production process.

The following sections in this chapter delineate a detailed step by step discussion of all relevant techniques and components.

7. 5. Preparation: Elements, Components and Techniques to Reach the Films' Aims & Objectives

The following segments will highlight which proper methods can help reach the aims of “altruistic filmmaking” while drawing from the findings of the preceding chapters. The sections will contemplate an assortment of relevant aspects from film analysis theory and insightful background information, as circumscribed in chapter 6. Film Analyses & Deconstruction above.

These subsequent sections will also incorporate a discourse about emotional responses that lead to allegiance (see chapter 4. Elements that Influence Reaching the Goals of Altruistic Filmmaking, section 4. 1. Structure of Sympathy & Emotional Response Estimation). Moreover, they will shine a light on methods of persuasion (see section 4. 2. The Psychology of “Persuasion” and its Applications in “Altruistic Filmmaking”) and on aspects that help to narrate a compelling story for the audience. In addition, they also highlight various other factors like locations, travel filmmaking aspects, the practitioner’s perspective and more to reflect upon the professional practice project and ascertain actionable and theoretic implications. All of these routines will help to accomplish the charitable undertaking of the RFPD film specifically.

The mission of the embraced and applied methods is to accomplish such tasks as to generate donations, mobilise audiences and stakeholders, drive voting, and foster or induce volunteering activities and commitment to social services.

7. 6. Construction & Reflection

Following Nichols’ (1983, 1985a) widely cited (e.g. Kuchenbuch, 2005; Askanius, 2012a), adapted/commented (e.g. Bernstein, 1998) and used documentary typology (elements), the main overall style or mode of this documentary is the “interview-oriented” style and compounds salient “didactic” (i.e. educational) features of the “expository mode” but without the “voice-of-God” (Nichols, 1985a; Bernstein, 1998). The former style, according to Kuchenbuch (2005), is termed the “interactive mode” by Bernstein (1998), distinguishing it from other (apparently non or less interventionist) approaches. In adhering to this convention, the documentarist profoundly interacts with the protagonists or filmed individuals and collects their remarks and interviews that eventually conceive the framework of the documentary (Kuchenbuch, 2005) while “[t]he direct-address style of the Griersonian tradition (...) was the first thoroughly worked-out mode of documentary (...) whose purposes were overwhelmingly didactic, it employed a supposedly authoritative yet often presumptuous off-screen narration.” (Nichols, 1985a, p. 259) In other words, this approach “incorporates direct address (characters

or narrator speaking directly to the viewer), usually in the form of the interview. (...) Sometimes profoundly revealing, sometimes fragmented and incomplete, such films have provided the central model for contemporary documentary.” (Nichols, 1985a, p. 260)

In the distinct instance of this RFPD documentary, further “didactic” (i.e. educational) components include (motion) graphics, diagrams, slide-like visuals and composite animations. Furthermore, as part of the years-long editing process, a voice-over text was applied for earlier edits and later discarded in favour of a newly recorded interview part with the filmmaker, myself. In this case, I appear with a different role as an elected long-term RFPD Advisory Board Member since 2013.

This revision during the editing process had several positive and notable implications reinforced by academic research. Firstly, the negative connotations and criticism of any (never to be seen on-camera narrator) voice-over that is often part of Nichols’ (1985a) “didactic, voice-of-God style” were circumvented. Secondly, the natural flow of interviews, speeches and statements in the documentary was not interrupted by an artificial, indirect, faceless, unknown and unaffected omniscient observer, which could have compromised the narration’s emotionalising tactics. Thirdly, although in another capacity, the filmmaker’s appearance transparently discloses or confesses his allegiance to the charity, their intentions and efforts overall, which is also ethical, fair and honest conduct towards the spectators. The film even imparts all three meaningful functions of the author of this study:

- The opening disclaimer reveals my role as a PhD candidate.
- The interview section underlines my responsibility, emotional allegiance, sympathy and long-term association with the humanitarian action group.
- The closing credits enunciate my creative function as the director, producer, DoP, sound-recordist and more through the indicative line “A FILM BY”.

Fourthly, this theoretical part and the professional artistic practice project follow Nichols (1985a), who argues that “films moving toward more complex forms” (Nichols, 1985a, p. 260) are “making patently clear what has been implicit all along: documentaries always were forms of re-presentation, never clear windows onto ‘reality’; the film-maker [sic!] was always a participant-witness and an active fabricator of meaning, a producer of cinematic discourse rather than a neutral or all-knowing reporter of the way things truly are.” (ibid.) Nichols also declared that “[f]ar too many contemporary film-makers [sic!] appear to have lost their voice. Politically, they forfeit their own voice for that of others (...)” (Nichols, 1985a, p. 261) With this unique approach of the RFPD documentary, I can thus confidently claim that I have spoken up and transparently

made my voice heard both as a documentary filmmaker, in this thesis and as a member of the backed charity. Lastly, this appearance of the documentarist also logically correlates, albeit not imitates, the performance of producer, narrator and “travel guide” Leonardo DiCaprio (as himself) in *Before the Flood* (2016), which is discussed in appendix A.

A range of other normative and formative factors compound or coalesce the creation of documentary productions, as described above in chapter 6. Film Analyses & Deconstruction about film analytical elements, stylistic devices and composition. The following segments explore some of the vital elements that have impacted the artistic film production of this research project.

These elements spread across the value chain (for production processes), described and segmented for the film industry by Wirtz (2016), which incorporates the simplified range from project acquisition via pre-production, production and post-production to distribution and the recipient. Of course, most of them occur within the production and post-production parts of the process.

Due to the interconnection of the artistic practice and theoretical findings in this thesis, three segments are closely related to the film’s production. Firstly, the findings on the theory of emotional responses (e.g. Smith, 1994, 2004) and persuasion (cf. Cialdini, 2007, 2016, 2021), as presented in chapter four flanked by supplementary techniques that assist in fulfilling the charitable mission objective. Secondly, the literature review above with its results from chapter 5. Literature about hybrid documentary forms and expressly “video activism” as a precursor or development stage and influential factor for charity filmmaking. Thirdly, interested readers may consult the results and relationship with the deconstructive analysis of *Before the Flood* (2016), as addressed in Appendix A – Film Analysis of *Before the Flood* (2016) below.

7.7. Locations, Places, Travel Elements and Event Coverage

Elements that profoundly shaped the creation of the practitioner’s film and selected from the theoretical findings and analysis for presentation are, for instance, the travels, places and locations of the film.

In robust correlation with those academic and film analytical insights, the captivating locations, environments scarcely encountered by non-natives and outsiders, witnessed live-action, and their instructional purposes ended up in the RFPD film.

The emotion-enhancing richness of reproduced places, sites and surroundings consolidated with the travel and road movie ingredients can probably enthuse audiences, are plentiful and span content from several years.

The travel or alternating ambient footage involves depictions of car journeys, arrivals, walk-throughs, observations, and establishing shots at new sites (e.g. a multitude of hospital inspections) and impressions of activities and encounters of the travel group around returning personalities in different communities, cities and states. Of course, there are only travel(-related) elements interspersed in the RFPD film, and I do not intend to claim that the film in its entirety is a travel documentary.

Yet these explorational impressions of previously unfamiliar localities also leverage and capitalise on potent effects of travel footage, as collated, synthesised and deciphered in the film analysis of *Before the Flood* (2016) (cf. appendix A).

To be precise, the film comprises footage shot over the years from 2013 to 2021 upon multiple occasions in Nigeria and Germany, including my recent interview recording. Thus, the project can easily be described as a long-term documentary project. Abstractly enumerated, the before-mentioned loci in the RFPD film are rural areas in several states in Nigeria (e.g. Ondo, Enugu, FCT Abuja), hospitals, pharmacies, and health care institutions. Supplementary filming locations were markets and open places, different states and cities, churches, (non-)governmental buildings, educational and university grounds and more.

More vividly illustrated, the film captures special events such as community dialogues and celebrations with traditional rulers clothed like local kings and other festivities. Exclusive coverage from within maternity wards and capturing women breastfeeding or in labour, as well as training and teaching events in several Nigerian states, joined the vibrant mix in the final edit with authentic Rotarian-hosted meetings and events. Such real-life, non-orchestrated original on-location footage drives supportive aspects such as the congruity, credence and authenticity of the covered charitable cause. It consequently also incites emotional “allegiance” and heartfelt “sympathy” (cf. Smith, 1994, 2004) with the locals, thereby feeding into the altruistic, humanistic and philanthropic goals circumscribed in chapters one and four, among others.

Particular examples of such emotional scenes are traditional dances (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 25:47 Min.) and women with their children at the maternity wards from, e.g. TC 04:42 Min., TC 15:42 Min. or TC 24:19 Min. of the film.

These descriptions and examples above (e.g. the community dialogues, music/dance, festivity and event-related) again signify the applicability or potential of Smith's (2004) "structure of sympathy" (as laid out in detail in section 4. 1. of the thesis) for an altruistic film, just like my RFPD documentary. Characters in a film may be portrayed in such a way that audiences might find it easy to as the first stage, "recognise" (i.e. construct) consistent characters along the continuum of a narration (Smith, 2004), secondly "align" with them by being "provided with visual and aural information more or less congruent with that available to characters, and so are placed in a certain structure of *alignment* with characters" (Smith, 2004, p. 75) "produced by two, interlocking character functions, cognate with narrational range and depth: *spatio-temporal attachment* and *subjective access*" (Smith, 2004, p. 142) and in a third consecutive step, that builds and relies on the first and second stage of the model then develop "allegiance" (Smith, 2004) that "denotes that level of engagement at which spectators respond sympathetically or antipathetically towards a character or group of characters." (Smith, 2004, p. 62)

In the case of my RFPD documentary, Smith's (2004) "group of characters" may be recurringly similarly portrayed groups of Nigerians such as explicitly (1) Nigerian mothers and children but may vary depending on the viewer and could also be determined as a group of (2) committed Nigerian medical or health care professionals or experts that are repetitively shown across the film or may converge for some audiences into an even broader group that could be likewise stereotypically described as (3) support-worthy or endorsable local Nigerians living in rural areas.

As Smith (2004) stipulates, "[a]llegiance pertains to the moral evaluation of characters by the spectator." (Smith, 2004, p. 84) He then goes on to specify that "[e]valuation, in this sense, has both cognitive and affective dimensions; for example, being angry or outraged at an action involves categorizing it as undesirable or harmful to someone or something, and being affected—*affectively* aroused—by this categorization." (Smith, 2004, p. 84) This could be applied easily to "altruistic film" or to my RFPD film in particular (with the following roughly logically inverse but still very suitable example): spectators would not be enraged about specific actions (in spec. places or situations) but relieved, pleased or positively surprised (as said actions may be desirable or beneficial) and consequently positively affected.

Various parts of the narrative (e.g. engaging, expressive and powerful *speeches* at visually unconsumed locations; enlightening, exhilarating and large-hearted *actions* in – for various Western viewers likely – never-trodden, exotic or intriguing environments; calm, thoughtful, educational and compassionate *interviews*) and applied stylistic devices or aesthetical features (e.g. emotionalising archetypal *close-*

ups; situational/adaptive *camera movements*; evocative and poignant *compositions* incorporating the uniqueness of the backdrop and localities; upbeat, merry, lively and energy-laden *musical interludes and events coverage*) of my RFPD documentary are deployed and arranged in such a fashion as (at least with the intention) to enable, foster, encourage or sustain such positive manifestations or variations of Smith's (2004) "sympathetic" reactions to or "allegiances" with depicted individuals.

7.8. Personal Perspective of the Practitioner and its Foundations in Documentary Film Studies

Consistent with the pertinent and seminal quotes from Nichols (1985a) in the penultimate section, the line of argument in this section follows Sponzel (2007), who argues that in between the actual perceptible reality and the depicted appropriation of reality lies the reality of the filmmaking itself as an influencing constituent. According to Sponzel (2007), this enfolds across the film formation process, starting with the research and ending with finalising the dramaturgy in the editing suite.

As the film practitioner and author Schadt (2002) argues and Hißnauer (2011) reflects, the documentary film is an interpretation of reality founded on real authenticity, while Schadt (2002) explains to prevail bound by and obeys the notion that documentary is (in some sense) a reflection of reality. Hißnauer (2011) then highlights in this context about Schadt that he is, on the other hand, a fervent advocate of a signature style of auteur filmmaking when embarking on an individual subjectively designing (non-fictionalising) and particularly creative approach.

In his epilogue's closing paragraph in his edited collection about illusions, reality, and authenticity in film, Sponzel (2007) concludes: "Authenticity can be the result of a filmic representation; it can arise in a complex interplay of several variable filmic criteria. Through the interaction of protagonist and camera (*mise en scène*), through spatial and temporal movement (in the filmic reality) and last but not least through the media competence and the reception behaviour of each individual viewer." [translated by the author] (Sponzel, 2007, p. 177)

This fusion between documentary as a reflection of reality but founded on [1] genuine authenticity (cf. Schadt, 2002) and [2] the filmmaking reality as an influential intermediate factor (cf. Sponzel, 2007), simultaneously [3] accounting for viewers' competence and reception behaviour (cf. Sponzel, 2007) while [4] attempting to or striving for accentuating positive governing artistic features about auteur filmmaking (cf. Hißnauer, 2011) is implemented in the realisation of the RFPD charity film.

Typical scenes that stand as shining exemplars of this fusion are, e.g. some of the images of traditional Nigerian musical performances. (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 25:47 Min.; or from 26:24 Min.; or from 26:38 Min.; or from 28:40 Min.) These exude [1] untarnished authenticity because they took place precisely as recorded (not initiated or fundamentally altered by or for the filmmaking process at all), and [2] involve evident bi-directional interactions between me as the filmmaker and the villagers. Some of them are laughing into the camera and are physically communicating with it. In addition, [3] the mode of representation here is changed from a distanced observational perspective to unambiguous interactivity and participation, which requires competence to shift reception and comprehension on the viewer's part. Finally, [4] because of the artistic choice of extreme wide-angle lenses here with great proximity to the performing artists at the same time, the scenes also reflect a singular vantage point (that dynamically follows the dancers' movements) and a unique intuition.

One could argue that the effects of what Sponzel calls "filmmaking reality" [translated from "Wirklichkeit des Filmemachens" by the author] (cf. Sponzel, 2007, p. 159) or that of the filmmaker applying the "interview-oriented" style (Nichols, 1985a) or "interactive mode" (Bernstein, 1998; Kuchenbuch, 2005) could be manifold. Debatably some conspicuous or evident examples are reality distortion effects, individual constraints, personal filters, preferences and (cognitive) biases or inclinations of the filmmaker, among a multitude of intentional or unintentional determinants.

Following this logic, documentary filmmaking can only always be a humble approximation quest, and the filmmaker should be cognizant of that. I, for one, indeed am cognizant of the multitude of possible influencing factors and limitations mentioned in the previous paragraph and the resulting approximate (i.e. also incomplete) nature of my RFPD film. The following paragraphs are an exemplar of effects that informed my perspective as the filmmaker, elucidated via abductive logical reasoning.

This scientific method is called retroduction - the "logic of inquiry". The technical word abductive reasoning is often interchangeably referred to as abduction, presumptive or hypothetical reasoning, retroduction, and various separate designations (Smets & Velázquez-Quesada, 3rd June 2019 [online]) from the field of logic. It can best be described as the "inference to the best explanation" (Sober, 2020, p. 25). "Retroduction entails the idea of going back from, below, or behind observed patterns or regularities to discover what produces them." (Blaikie, 2004, p. 972)

As a practitioner-filmmaker, I filmed some of the aforementioned traditional dances and varied celebrations in 2013 (and the rest of them ensuing in later years). This initial

encounter was among my first wholehearted experiences of longstanding African vibes, folklore and musical expressions in local urban places in Nigeria. The feelings and sensations were overwhelming, and as a director/cameraman, I have closely interacted with the vocalists, dancers and musicians. It felt powerful, joyous, mesmerising, and I enormously immersed myself as if in a constant “flow”-state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

In an interview with “WIRED” headlined “Go With The Flow” (Geirland, 1st September 1996 [online]), Csikszentmihalyi describes this state of “[b]eing completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost.” (Geirland, 1st September 1996, p. 1 [online]). This state, with its typical characteristics and postulated preconditions (cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), guided my camera movements on such powerful occasions as this precedent in the film.

Upon the situation that the children and young women were dancing for the traditional rulers in an elegant and artistic scene (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 16:49 Min.), I received a remarkable golden musical instrument outside of the recordings. It looked like a sword with small tinkling bells, and I was asked to dance with the children for these local leaders rejoicingly. Such outstanding and pivotal moments were both enlightening and overwhelming and reinforced my “allegiance” with and “sympathy” (cf. Smith, 1994, 2004) for the natives. Similar touching and mesmerising circumstances and even longer dancing sequences occurred several times and made it into the film accordingly (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 23:19 Min.). Through these very personal and intimate encounters and my openness to feel and grasp these unique moments, I intended to capture the essence of this personal experience and transport it to move the audience profoundly.

Observations like “unique moments” and “intimate encounters” are certainly a personal diaristic introspective recollection of my experiences shooting on location (as the title of this section suggests). The intention is, of course, to transport some of my experiences to the viewership through filming strategies like using (extreme) close-ups, engaging directly with members of the local community and filming their vigorous activities and emotional bodily/facial expressions (like singing, dancing, clapping, and other movements or intriguing actions) and selecting the most compelling existing takes for montage sequences.

In addition, leaning on and corroborating with Hißnauer’s (2011, pp. 117-138) “semio-pragmatics of >authentic< representations” [translated by the author] (see, e.g. likewise in section 7. 12. below), this approach would fit with Hißnauer’s (2011, p. 133) description of “close tracking of protagonists” [translated by the author] which serves

the end that the “camera vouches for the closeness to the protagonists (intimacy and subjectivity)” [translated by the author] (ibid.).

I would argue that this characterisation and my approach (i.e. at least its intention) fulfils Smith’s (2004) circumscription that “[a]llegiance depends upon the spectator having what she takes to be reliable access to the character’s state of mind, on understanding the context of the character’s actions, and having morally evaluated the character on the basis of this knowledge.” (Smith, 2004, p. 84)

As I cannot imagine negative moral evaluations of the portrayed subjects, who are either, for instance, in a state of suffering (like women in labour pain) or dancing and acting joyfully and assume that spectators have “reliable access to the character’s state of mind” (Smith, 2004, p. 84) through my depictions and can “recognise” (cf. Smith, 2004) the displayed joyful dancing experiences, festivities and exhilarating actions from their own experiences and “align” with the subjects based on the explications and quotes of Smith’s (2004) “alignment” in section 4. 1., I believe it is reasonable to argue that Smith’s (2004) “allegiance” can be generated in audiences like that.

I ultimately strived to convey as much of the aforementioned “flow”-state (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) experiences via the edit to the audience. To transport the intense emotions I sensed while shooting, I even danced with several performers or moved concordant with them as if gliding to obtain their unique viewpoint.

Some spectators may respond to the described joyous and lively dancing scenes in the film as “affective mimicry [which] describes the phenomenon whereby we not only recognize but mimic an emotion expressed by another.” (Smith, 2004, p. 92) This reaction may occur “involuntary” (cf. Smith, 2004, p. 96) but could manifest in such a way that audiences start nodding their head to the beat, humming with the sound or tune or slightly moving their bodies to the vibe of the music (or perhaps even gently imitating/mimicking body movements of people on screen). These scenes and their possible spectator reactions are, of course, only some of many instances where Smith’s (2004) “affective mimicry” could happen in both “altruistic filmmaking” in general and my RFPD film in particular.

Through alternating sequences in editing (increasing in duration and frequency of exhibited music scenes unto the finale), these ceremonial, exhilarating, uplifting and inciting moments were climactically and gradually interwoven, particularly in the last third of the documentary, including their transition into the credits (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 30:09 Min.). The concept behind this was to help transcend the impressions through the screen and transport the heartfelt emotional response, which

Smith (1994, 2004) elucidates from “recognition” to moulding “allegiance”. An “allegiance” and “sympathetic” reaction that I already tried to breed through my openhearted interplay with the Nigerians.

Consequentially, the actual RFPD charity film production process on location in Nigeria expressly included the following three subsections (cf. Part 1-3).

7.9. Part 1: Value Chain, Process & Technology in Travel-Related Documentary

Firstly, the tours across sometimes several states during the sojourns in Nigeria were coordinated visits that I joined as the practitioner/documentarian. The team around the initiator Robert Zinser (co-founder and long-term CEO, RFPD) had a tight schedule and already strenuous protracted working hours. These were partially prepared ahead of the journey and partly adjusted according to necessities and obligations.

What would happen exactly, how places actually looked like and ultimately anticipating how to film those circumstances was not designed in detail, though, as typical in the “Direct Cinema” (cf. Döcker, 2012; Nichols, 1985a) methodology. Still, more night-shift working was required because I dealt with everything from camera, through directing, to sound recording and during the nights at the hotels even the job of DMT (data management technician or data wrangler). Always carrying a minimum of one DSLR for videography implied that I was also the stills photographer accountable for PR photographs of the team, editing rushes, or even preparing publications in the lodgings during nighttime.

This work practice is similar to what Götzke & Knüppel (2009), G. Stuart Smith (2011) in *Going Solo: Doing Videojournalism in the 21st Century* and later Lancaster (2018) in *DSLR Cinema* described from their distinctive viewpoints how digital technology and innovation had facilitated such a one-person-show (cinematic) process in documentary filmmaking or striking video journalism analogously. Modern digital recording technology allowed for immediate controllability (Hahn, 2005; Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009). Inexpensive, reliable memory cards, low-power consumption hard drives and other easy-to-use storage solutions empowered “all-day” recording. Hahn (2005, p. 50) referred to this as “longer, continuous recordings” [translated by the author], and Hoffmann (2006, p. 68) addressed “shooting substantially longer at a stretch” [translated by the author] even before the everyday use of solid-state media or smart cards. Consequently, the bulk media offloading of the

profuse artistic shots recorded for the RFPD film during the day happened mostly at night in the accommodations in Nigeria.

Such practices and technological preconditions are altruistic filmmaking's heart and soul. Just like with video activism and other forms of the documentary, they expand access to the labour market or empower filmmakers without a track record to boost their careers while at the same time drastically reducing implementation and material costs (Hahn, 2005; Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; Lancaster, 2018).

With commonplace Apple iPhones and 1 TB of internal storage to record with any of the three internal back-facing 4K cameras (with HDR and Dolby Vision®) as of this writing (mid 2023) and other phones recording with even higher image quality (widely available up to 8K, mid 2023), technology has dramatically transformed the possibilities and elevated them to unparalleled heights.

Auteur documentary, hybrid documentary and particularly altruistic filmmaking profit tremendously from these openings today even more while previous evidence concerning the first documentary endeavours of the RFPD film in 2013 already appears as if technologically from ancient history.

This approach in the RFPD film pays tribute to the fact that many meetings, discourses, and agreements have to be reached in a minimal amount of time. At the same time, visiting proceedings, documenting (statistical) project progress, ordering emendations including optimisations and selecting new beneficiaries to support while finding new partners that flank or subsidise the charitable efforts were mandatory.

Hence the film comprises components of landmark travel-related documentaries, including featured travelling related scenes and shots such as from inside a moving automobile (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 03:00 Min.) and drive-by or establishing shots and images from the countryside, rural areas, or towns (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 26:08 Min.).

These travel-related storytelling components integrate smoothly into the forms of "relational montage" [translated by the author] (cf. Kuchenbuch, 2005, p. 69) that are incorporated widely across the film.

In contrast to, for example, chronological or spatio-temporal editing or narrative structures, relational forms rely on symbolism, associations, metaphors and other types of montage that depend on or presuppose mental connections. (Kuchenbuch, 2005)

Such mental links and patterns of symbolism, associations and metaphors are ingrained constituent elements across the RFPD documentary. Prominent examples of

this editing strategy are conjunctions or juxtapositions of proclamations or solicitations by Obiora Ike, like “and we need to live in a world where human beings can be respected in their dignity and their value, for the simple reason that we are all human.” (RFPD documentary, from TC 02:43 Min.) with engulfing expressive picture collages of the reality of life and the conditions in the country, including destitution, privation and hardship that enclose the textual segment.

Of course, this contrasting affective symbolism intends to boost awareness and produce emotional responses (cf. Smith, 1994, 2004) in a pensive, compassionate, and considerate way. The concept approximates that, for instance, comparably wealthy (western) audiences will sympathise, react perplexed, or feel an urge of philanthropy while cosily viewing from the comfort of their posh living rooms or otherwise lavishly decorated premises. Furthermore, the functional value of such montage sequences or storytelling elements leads to cinematic conciseness, which is compaction, hence omitting superfluous fragments.

Variations of “relational montage” [translated by the author] (cf. Kuchenbuch, 2005), symbolism, techniques of reduction or compaction (e.g. through elliptical storytelling), as part of film semiotics and employed as stylistic devices are not only recognisable within this distinct film. They are also partially prevailing in documentaries such as *Plastic Planet* (2009), *Before the Flood* (2016), *What the Health* (2017), and various long-term multi-country special-interest documentaries that span prolonged periods, such as several years in the RFPD sample.

7. 10. Part 2: Stylistic Approach, Representation of the Truth & the “Unknown Unknown” of the Johari Window

Secondly, the travel mode above paved the way for the stylistic journey I embarked on for this documentary. This subsection ties in directly with the last few paragraphs’ editing and montage style statements.

Aside from what Kuchenbuch (2005) explains to be Bernstein’s (1998) “interactive mode”, i.e. the “interview-oriented” style (Nichols, 1985a), there are also observational elements that were deliberately included in the RFPD film. It is arguably not the raw “observational” mode (Nichols, 1985a). Instead, various observational (i.e. non-intrusive, unobtrusive, more distanced and relatively passive) elements that are akin to a practice associated with the widely-researched “Direct Cinema” (by authors such as Saunders, 2007; Hoffmann, 2019) were implemented throughout the production process and into the final version.

Although my RFPD film in its entirety is surely not an example of “Direct Cinema”, there are several overlapping characteristics that relate to or resemble and possibly originate in facets of “Direct Cinema” as scholars like Christof Decker (2007) describe them in a chapter on “Richard Leacock and the Origins of Direct Cinema” in Beate Engelbrecht’s (2007) *Memories of the Origins of Ethnographic Film*. These characteristics align with aspects that feed into the framework of altruistic filmmaking. They are comparable to or intersect with classifications of specific hybrid documentary formats and video activism as iterated in this thesis and possible hypotheses and corollaries to altruistic filmmaking.

While these attributes relate to very early precursors to later (descendant) forms of documentary that this thesis, in turn, more specifically highlights as antecedents to altruistic filmmaking, various statements that Decker (2007) makes about “Direct Cinema” apply literally to altruistic filmmaking today. This finding underscores some origins of specific techniques and phenomena: “A new conception of experience emerged giving rise to hand-held cinematography as the foremost realm of stylistic expression.” (Decker, 2007, p. 32)

Decker (2007) correspondingly underscores “Direct Cinema’s” furtherance, relevancy, impact and scope by arguing “that the American Direct Cinema has had more far-reaching implications for documentary film, shaping the numerous variations that evolved out of the early observational practices. On the one hand, it introduced a new notion of proximity between filmmaker and pro-filmic subject. The desire to get closer to people and events resulted from a heightened mobility setting the camera free to explore and establish a new sense of place.” (Decker, 2007, pp. 31-32)

These descriptions about “hand-held cinematography” (Decker, 2007, p. 32), “a new notion of proximity” (Decker, 2007, p. 31), a “desire to get closer to people and events” (ibid.), and “a heightened mobility” (ibid.) adapt to and align with the transition that I describe across the thesis, from hybrid documentary forms and video activism to altruistic filmmaking, enabled by changes in production processes and technological factors with effects on style and possibilities of filmmaking.

Of course, the above-outlined aspects were Decker’s (2007) descriptions around the original transformation and historical developments (while referencing their central actors and stances) from institutional, big-budget, large-crew, (relatively) controlled, traditional studio filmmaking with technically constraining equipment and lighting of the 1950s and particularly earlier to the emerging “Direct Cinema” (cf. Decker, 2007).

Nonetheless, it is plausible to argue that the above and also complementary findings, such as about “editing [that] evolved as the second major area in which the

individual style of a documentary filmmaker could find room for expression” (Decker, 2007, p. 32) very much apply to altruistic filmmaking today as well, especially in a leveraged and enhanced way and that they also reverberate across the production of my RFPD documentary.

In Hoffmann, Kilborn & W. C. Barg (2012), Döcker (2012) writes about seven directions in documentary filmmaking, including “Direct Cinema”. Here, Döcker (2012) recapitulates statements of the famous German documentarian and perpetrator of “Direct Cinema” Klaus Wildenhahn. She (Döcker, 2012) recounts that in a Deutschlandfunk interview from 2010, Wildenhahn exclaims his enthusiasm about conjunct aspects linked to unpredictability in (documentary) filmmaking procedures.

Döcker (2012) equally explains Wildenhahn’s exaltation about exposure or leverage of randomness and chance and vague or little planning as essentials of documentary work. She (Döcker, 2012) correspondingly summarises that Wildenhahn further affirms to regret that such creative procedures outside of adhering to and working with an exposé that was prefabricated for the documentary are facilitated or funded no longer. Instead, Wildenhahn alleges, according to that reproduced interview, that filmmakers are stipulated to steer the documentary endeavour according to the above pre-scripted narrative nowadays. (Döcker, 2012) This constrained approach is momentarily dissimilar from the inception and apogee of the milestone “Direct Cinema” movement and undoubtedly not advisable for a free, investigatory, open-minded and self-governed project, therefore not transposed into the RFPD film like that.

In order to enumerate trailblazers of unconstrained observational work, this thesis then considers Döcker (2012), who constitutes or suggests the following list of American first movers or pioneers of the genre that have left a legacy: “Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, Donn Allen Pennebaker, Chris Hegedus, David and Albert Maysles” [translated by the author] (Döcker, 2012, p. 57).

The influencing factors Wildenhahn wants to preserve in documentary filmmaking are feasible and justifiably even desirable in charity filmmaking. The long-term process of making the RFPD film allowed for embracing such varied aspects of unpredictability. Additionally, it leverages authenticity through influences of uncontrollability and haphazardness, as examples presenting the shooting style encompassing this chapter indicate.

To substantiate, many of the illustrations that could logically be declared to form a pattern in the RFPD film are exemplars that unfolded from inspirations of the moment.

These were transposed in synergy with the propensity, intent and awareness of the filmmaker.

Another specific telling example is that it was natural for me to film almost every room of numerous clinics plus dispensaries that we frequented as if inspecting them meticulously. There I tried to apprehend and capture everything from instruments to compartments, medical appliances, installations, signboards (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 11:40 Min., from TC 16:32 Min., or from TC 20:50 Min.), and more that was pretty different from every western infirmary to which I have ever been. I frankly did not want to miss anything valuable for the cause while it was unbeknownst if and when I would come back to each precise locality.

Serendipitous footage that was priceless for the cause would range from coincidental encounters with breastfeeding mothers (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 24:19 Min.) via unanticipated or even startling visuals of currently operated chemist's shops in parlous shape with scattered pharmaceuticals (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 02:03 Min.) to fortuitous fleeting acquaintances like with the little girl laying on a clinic corridor table (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 01:19 Min.).

In concurrency with compelling or resonating orations or interviews, these overwhelming illustrations would permit transporting, envisioning or perhaps abstractly re-living real-life onsite incidents, which promises to emotionalise audiences towards the bountiful cause.

Moreover, I wanted to acknowledge the adage that "seeing is believing"¹⁵, which Zinser habitually uses verbally to convince his prospective collaborators. I sought to underscore it and persuade audiences of what I have witnessed myself while reflecting that those trips to Nigeria have aggregated a profound, enduring, and meaningful impact on manifold facets of my life experience.

Furthermore, film-analytical examples such as the before-mentioned comprehensive visual representation of the health care system, infirmaries, and surrounding public infrastructure assist the RFPD film in reaching its goals effectively. Such visual repetitions and recurring motifs conduce dramaturgical emphasising, emotionalising and focusing effects as well as implications of deliberative reception control.

Eventually, the modus operandi and especially the relationship with chance circumscribed with the last paragraphs inevitably results in what Döcker (2012) points out about "Direct Cinema" having an editing process that gained significance due to

¹⁵ Note: Interestingly, *Seeing Is Believing: Handicams, Human Rights and the News* (2002) is also a documentary concerning the Handicam Revolution (cf. Cizek, 2006), i.e. video activism enhanced or enabled by revolutionary digital technology.

incorporating a plentitude of film material and using high footage to final film output ratio. (also cf. Hoffmann, 2006 in discussing consequences of multiplication of footage through technological progress) This convention, of course, extends the post-production phase considerably, which applied to the RFPD documentary.

Comparing findings from three areas navigates towards interim conclusions here. Firstly, findings from observing the approach of diverse long-term documentaries. (cf. condensed case studies and short examples, esp. in chapters four and five) Secondly, dissecting my artistic practice for RFPD in this chapter as part of the research project while instantiating it as an example for charity documentaries. Thirdly, the descriptions by DoP Rossi (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]) regarding the documentary *Before the Flood* (2016) adjunctive with implied findings of its corresponding film breakdown (see appendix A).

How could the *Before the Flood* (2016) crew possibly have foreknown what would befall them in each country? It seems evident that touring more than ten countries within ca. two production years (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]; *Before the Flood – The Journey*, 2019 [online]), even if pre-organised partly, must have garnered them a remarkable quantity of footage for the editing suite. Plausibly, the cutters would then have consolidated copious unpredictable, multifaceted, unpolished and incalculable events, experiments and opportunities as footage from those voyages.

The subsequent notion serves as a reflective elaboration to discern the substance of the vocational practice adequately. Experience from practice recognises there might be ca. 7-10 official items like meeting a traditional Igbo ruler or the German ambassador to Nigeria – the latter never made it into the film – or a conversation with the Nigerian health commissioner on the day-to-day travel and shooting schedule. However, it is not likely to appreciate in advance which gemstones and uncut diamonds such an agenda will eventually unveil on location.

What the documentarian might not know or possess control over beforehand, for instance, is that a vibrant crowd of 300-500 people might attend a particular event or that a congregation primarily of children will convene in front of a half-finished place of worship to listen to their beloved “Monsignore” (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 28:23 Min.). These events could accompany peculiarities and precious intense moments like “breaking the Kola nut” with a bishop or regional commemorations that might adorn an otherwise inconspicuous agenda item. Such outstanding experiences just occur. Facilitating these or investing in the time and capacity to actualise such concealed

potentials is arguably a speciality of altruistic filmmaking. However, unfortunately, not all of these auspicious occasions made it into the film.

There is a convergence of examples in the last several paragraphs describing “unpredictable”, “not known”, “incalculable”, “fortuitous”, “unanticipated”, “coincidental”, and “serendipitous” footage through my diaristic reflections regarding my RFPD documentary, deliberations on *Before the Flood* (2016) and details concerning foundations in “Direct Cinema”. This convergence underscores that unpredictability due to “not knowing” plays a considerable role in documentary filmmaking, “Direct Cinema”, and “altruistic filmmaking” in particular.

As such, it appears worthy of introducing and incorporating an already versatile model of the “[Un]known [Un]known” (the “Johari Window”; cf. Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961) into the discourse, which has never been interlinked with (hybrid) forms of documentary filmmaking before, to the best of my knowledge.

The Johari Window (Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961)

The “Johari window” is a classification method devised by the American psychologists Luft & Ingham (1955, 1961), elsewhere demarcated as the “Johari house”, consisting of four rooms (Handy, 1999). It was designed for application as an inter- and intra-personal (relationship-related) psychology or (group) therapy concept. (e.g. cf. Luft, 1984) The logical grid consists of two columns with two rows each and represents all four possible combinations of information “(not) known to self” vs “(not) known to others”. This conceptual construct contains the quadrants “Arena”, “Blind spot”, “Façade”, and “Unknown”. (Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961; Saxena, 2015; Kim, 2017) Congruously, it serves as a heuristic model in learning, communication and business settings (Lowes, 2020). Moreover, it is relevant for self-help solutions (Anderson, 2021) and more specific as “a simple and useful tool for self-awareness training, personality development, interpersonal communication, team development, group dynamics and intergroup relations” (Saxena, 2015, p. 2). Since its dissemination, it has been widely affirmed and integrated within the realm of intelligence authorities, defence, security and risk/disaster management (Rumsfeld, 2002 [archived]; Kim, 2017; Anderson, 2021), organisations and management theory and practice (Handy, 1999), in aeronautics (Anderson, 2021), as well as information sciences or for specific business projections and strategic management methodology (Shenton, 2007; Anderson, 2021). Its formulation (and reinvigoration in an intelligence briefing of ex-US Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld) (Rumsfeld, 2002 [archived]), referred to as the “Rumsfeld Matrix” (Anderson, 2021, p. 16), is likewise discussed regarding the

applicability and scrutinised intellectually by advocates of the “Skeptics” movement and promoters of the tenets of science, logical thinking and critical reasoning. (e.g. cf. Shermer, 2005).

This thesis now introduces adapting its underlying principles to documentary videos to elicit a few specialities of charity filmmaking. Arguably, presenting “known knowns” (e.g. cf. Rumsfeld, 2002 [archived]; Anderson, 2021) (known to the self and others) (e.g. cf. Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961) in a documentary is crucial and insinuates nothing more than regular reporting. It is manifestly also least newsworthy, unsophisticated and unambitious. Revealing clandestine or ensconced issues, though, that are “known to [one]self” but “not known to others” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) is considerably enticing for the broader public, but neither effortful nor insightful for the publicist. With the last two sectors, it becomes much more interesting: Presenting content that formerly was “not known to [one]self” but “known to others” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) as if this was a unique significant discovery frequently depreciates journalism to substandard. Interpreting this cell differently: Not reporting about circumstances because of a shortage of knowledge while everyone already has the insights is the same logical cell, but also revelatory of mediocrity or ignorance. Exerting a rigorous examination of the last cell of “not known to [one]self” and “not known to others” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) figuratively signifies unearthing the golden key to the sacred tomb.

Application of the “Johari Window” (Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961) to Filmic Examples:

The following presents all four possible combinations of the “Johari window” (Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961) applied to documentary examples.

Regarding examples connected to depicting climate change in a documentary, “known knowns” (e.g. cf. Rumsfeld, 2002 [archived]; Anderson, 2021) would be visualisations that unpretentiously exhibit melting glaciers, resource exploitation, overpollution, or animal species’ extinction without any further context, peculiarities, interrelation, profound meaning or added information. It should be plausible to anticipate that the typical audience of charitable films would be acquainted with these general facts already or expected and have seen complementary imagery several times earlier in their lives. It is likewise worth pointing out that those characteristic visuals are expressly required to establish common grounds and intrigue in the appropriate context, combination, or with extra value.

“Not known to [one]self” (e.g. cf. Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961) but (commonly or highly likely) “known to others” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) would be for the documentarist to

ignorantly aver that depicting poor third-world-country children (without any specific insights, added qualities, or in-depth continuative information) would be something particularly resourceful or entirely new.

“Known to [one]self” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) but (typically or most probably) “not known to others” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*) would be differentiable or even idiosyncratic footage from inside the health care system. This scope could range from particular buildings to hospital-specific facilities or special educational midwife or gynaecologist group instructions untypical in other cultures. Most western audiences who have never travelled to Africa in all likelihood have not witnessed such matters in person heretofore and have assumably only briefly if ever glimpsed intricate representations in films without having much background knowledge whatsoever. This assumption is certainly only valid if they have not been explicitly curious about that subject before.

Another specific example from the RFPD film: Meeting a traditional Igbo ruler in his official robes with a crown on his extravagantly ornamented commanding throne (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 07:20 Min.).

Now the tricky and most auspicious part: Footage that the filmmaker creates without prior knowledge about its existence or importance. Neither he nor the general audience would have known, envisioned or witnessed this before. Indeed, audiences innately expect generic desolate imagery of a rundown health care system in the context of this RFPD film. What they and the filmmaker might not have anticipated is probably best represented by the scene where gynaecologist Peter Neuner spontaneously removes the blanket of a delivery bed in a rural cottage hospital (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 04:56 Min.).

Births frequently ensue without grid electricity (visualised via RFPD documentary, from TC 10:36 Min.) on broken, rusted, non-cushioned and unserviceable tables, unworthy and devoid of much medical equipment like here. Women must travel for up to thirty miles on donkeys, in a ricksha (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 22:19 Min.), on a tattered motorbike (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:24 Min.), or foot, sometimes carrying and bringing several minors with them (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:06 Min.) while often struggling with intense labour pains.

The most enlightening realisation for me was to fathom fully that the devastating medical gear, rooms, equipment, tools, and furniture are actually in use by millions of people per year. Plus, in unworthy abysmal conditions without proper measures to clean, sanitise, autoclave, refurbish, or use entirely new products instead. It was more the burnt-in comprehensive picture or collection of distinctive elements that were

unknown or unexpected rather than a single exceptional surprise – although there undoubtedly were many indelible surprises.

Full disclosure: It is challenging to assemble these illustrations and not fall prey to the “curse of knowledge” or to “hindsight bias” (e.g. cf. Camerer, Loewenstein & M. Weber, 1989). Working with and accumulating knowledge about a topic from 2012 to today and predicting how much an outsider would know about it and accurately recall how I initially reacted to it is incredibly complex. These are clearly limitations.

Fortunately, though, I believe that everyone watching the RFPD documentary will assumably come up with self-selected examples from the multifarious footage with these elucidations above.

Why is the unplanned “unknown unknown” (e.g. cf. Rumsfeld, 2002 [archived]; Anderson, 2021) footage so eminently enticing? The preceding theoretic commentaries regarding unpredictability, openness to surprising influences, deliberate effortful and time-consuming interpretations of the moment, and heeding fleeting phenomena in the in situ documentary practice are those precious moments where “magic” happens. Ideally, the filmmaker can exclusively share the “unknown unknown” (e.g. cf. *ibid.*), something neither he nor (parts of) his audience have kenmed or expected beforehand. Slightly attenuated, but admittedly still intriguing, would be to uncover ‘the rare and contextually unpredicted’. This disclosure would be something rare or difficult to observe unobscured by the documentarian. Plus, it was never personally experienced like that by the viewership and is thus challenging to predict in context.

Some Particularly Spur-of-the-Moment or Impromptu Scenes:

An utterly unforeseen shot, coincidentally the last ever captured on this one journey to Nigeria, was that of mother and daughter sitting next to motorcars on the opposite side of a buzzing street in Abuja that ended up as the establishing shot of the documentary (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 00:22 Min.).

Another unreckoned unique moment was that of a woman in labour while a nurse was trying to determine and potentially affect the child’s/children’s orientation in the womb before birth (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 11:03 Min.).

Of course, there were many more surprising and engrossing circumstances, like the before-mentioned scene of mother and children running on a dirt road leading to a tertiary hospital (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:06 Min.), thankfully recorded through an open car window.

As a lot of “altruistic filmmaking” is conducted by independent filmmakers, single shooters, small teams and activists for and with charitable organisations/projects on a tight budget and with strict resource constraints, every opportunity to gather peculiar, seldom seen, unique, artistic, intriguing or otherwise inspiring footage is welcome.

In addition, unusual, striking, rare or noteworthy sights should be remembered better and longer because they are more memorable than banalities, commonplaces, truisms or platitudes on the audio-visual level.

(Re-)enacting or staging such extraordinary captures will most likely be less truthful and authentic (see also section 7. 12. below), (much) more expensive overall, difficult to manage with a small team, costly to research and organise, and arguably strongly interfering with and altering the narration which may inhibit “altruistic” portrayals.

Hence letting unpredictability and hitherto unknown elements and particularly footage enter the production process is a potential for capturing exceptional, unconventional, rarely seen, novel and therefore desirable content that a small or non-budget project (privately financed) usually would not have.

Thus evidently, factory-typical efficacy and pre-ordained unembellished filming like clockwork are not characteristic elements of the framework for charity filmmaking. Preferably those are aspects of “flow” (see above in this chapter; cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), variation, unforeseeability, freedom, unrestrictedness and creative autonomy. All variables and prerequisites should be ancillary (i.e. subordinated) to the aims for creating emotional responses, forging “allegiances” with “sympathetic” reactions (see chapter four; cf. Smith, 1994, 2004), educating, raising awareness, mobilising the viewership, and generating donations and hence conclusively attaining the goals of altruistic filmmaking.

Finally, in summation of this second subsection, one can also circumvent the dilemma that Döcker (2012) proclaims as prompting “battles of belief” [translated by the author] concerning purity, directness, reality and truth. Because this research follows the perception that not the rather abstract concept of ‘truth’ is to be revealed somehow, but a pragmatic ‘depiction of the truth’ is to be presented. The latter is commensurately subordinated to the ardent zeal of the altruistic calling.

7. 11. Part 3: Connections with the Multitudinous Hazards of Embedded Journalism, War & Crisis Reporting

Thirdly, this compendious segment considers a topologically adjacent usage category within the taxonomy of documentary work that has several similarities to altruistic filmmaking and practitioners and scientists alike may conclude their salient overlapping criteria. Authors, reporters and print or TV journalists such as Rados (2003), Schwarte (2007) in *Embedded Journalists*, Junger (2010), Reichelt (2010) in *War Reporter* [translated by the author], or physicians such as Munz (2007) in *At the centre of the catastrophe: What it really means to help on the ground* [translated by the author] address this artefact. They introspect, assess, and enlighten with their in-depth practice experiences and some analyses of war and crisis zone (electronic) news gathering (ENG), embedded journalism (and documentation) (Schwarte, 2007). They recount or dissect (often their own) distinct fieldwork in disaster regions. Various incidents and individual conflicts overlap with congruent anecdotal evidence from the RFPD film production plus the resultant learnings that may aid altruistic filmmaking overall.

As elucidated before in chapter five above, there are multiple manifestations of “video activism” (Askanius, 2013; Askanius, 2014). Some of its variations include “documenting protests and human rights violations” (Askanius, 2012b, p. 21) like the “witness video” (e.g. Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015; Coskan, 2016) or the “protest video” (Askanius, 2012b). In this context, Askanius (2012b) has researched “video documenting and framing demonstrations and acts of public disobedience. Videos falling into this category range from more or less random cell phone shots over the semi-professionally edited productions by media activist to well-established video collectives who systematically document political violence and police brutality in order to feed the news flow with stories told from a street perspective of the people protesting in the streets.” (Askanius, 2012b, p. 13)

Anyone who has ever cogitated media coverage of such protests, marches, rallies, riots, demonstrations, or different forms of interconnected political and social activism on television can hopefully accede to this thesis’ rationale that there are countless dangers and consequences while filming.

Unisonous with those of “crisis reporting” variations above, these hazards vary from interferences of unknown militias, different laws or dubious ways of law enforcement practices to attacks or worse conditions. Respective provisions by the video producer or filmmaker range from extended safety measures via required police or military protection to extensive, conscientious, skilfully and professionally supported preparation.

Except for immediate attacks and more harmful repercussions, I have personally defied all these threats and assumed appropriate preliminaries and measures during the RFPD production. I would thus propose to prepare diligently, remain vigilant and circumspect, and, if possible, travel with qualified guides.

There exist countless additional threats and risks that are pivotal but unexpected. Reading Reichelt (2010), one learns of seemingly volitionally unpreventable disturbing impressions and experiences that can even imprint themselves on the reader's memory. Many of these incidents come across as harrowing, disconcerting and unsettling, but Reichelt (2010) highlights that one would expect different visual memories to last than those that eventually prevail. It appears to be especially initially unsuspected things like unique human destinies and emotional encounters that stick in the memory. So, one can contend that charity film production environments comparable to crisis reporting or embedded journalism can be perilous, and on-the-ground happenings can burn themselves into episodic memory.

Lastly but not comprehensively, there are paramount multi-layered influences identified by or concluded from the non-fiction output of the writers, as mentioned under this third bullet point, that influence documentary fieldwork as in charity productions around the globe. These often feed into the practical limitations of altruistic filmmaking.

Examples are the restraints in the choice of travel or filming locations, various dependencies towards an agenda, people or other parameters, initial visa and cover letters. Furthermore, cultural and language boundaries, influence of political stratagems, (indirect) (tried) censorship, attempted manipulation through propaganda strategies of interest groups, harsh and demanding onsite working conditions, and many more play a role. These enumerated findings are particularly accumulated from a mixture of Schwarte (2007), Munz (2007), Reichelt (2010), and multifarious personal experiences.

Munz (2007), for instance, exemplifies several of these limitations by, among further remarks across the entire book, devoting a whole chapter with countless explications to "The Myth of the Objectivity of the Media" [translated by the author] (Munz, 2007, pp. 17-36), referring to professional disaster journalism on the ground.

In subsumption, weighty aspects of embedded journalism like CNN type daily (live) coverage and overnight production (cf. Schwarte, 2007) are not part of altruistic filmmaking. On the other hand, many coercive or grave far-reaching factors of ENG reporting from war and crisis zones also befall one-man-band charitable documentary filmmaking.

7. 12. Interference with Reality: Interacting, not Playacting or Re-Enacting

In continuation of the details about the epistemological construct of truth in altruistic filmmaking as expounded above, it is indispensable to note that almost everything composed into the final edit of the RFPD film was captured as it happened.

According to current research, the filmmaker could interfere with the reality he intends to showcase in various fashions. (Hoffmann, Kilborn & W. C. Barg, 2012) Several prominent techniques in hybrid documentary formats, docu-fiction and reality TV would facultatively implicate interrupting or altering the in-situ actions (e.g. generation of coincidental moments), requesting/eliciting behavioural changes, artificially putting personalities in a specific factitious environment (e.g. island, studio, fortress) or even scripting interviews and directing the protagonists as if they were play-actors – not few of them even are (semi-skilled/amateur) actors. (e.g. cf. portrayals of div. hybrid mostly television formats in Fromm, 1999; Brunst, 2003; Lünenborg et al., 2011)

Expanding intellectually upon and creatively interpreting the various discussions by several authors and chapters about authenticity, reality and truth, particularly in Hißnauer (2011) and Sponzel (2007), this study construes that all of the above interferences or tamperings lie on multiple continua between “truth” and “deceit/fake”, “fictitious” and “non-fictional”, “honest” and “dishonest”, and “believable” and “non-believable”, “persuasive” and “unconvincing” (and more) (cf. similar but different continua in Hißnauer, 2011, p. 60; ideas with relations from chapters in Sponzel, 2007). In his book *Speaking Truths with Film*, Nichols (2016) puts it eloquently: “The filmmaker becomes more than a professional maker of films; she becomes a collaborator and confidant (...). What emerges is a dialogical truth, the type of truth about the self that only arrives in and through encounter, interaction, and relationship. It is radically distinct from factual or logical truth and from personal or subjective truth.” (Nichols, 2016, p. 83) These are all different scales and spectra to study the resemblances to reality in a given documentary. Other arguments such as valid interpositions that affect suitable and acceptable forms of compaction may also be layered on top, ready for discourse.

The RFPD film includes only scarce examples worth mentioning, where the filmmaker has reconstructed situations for filming. Two isolated examples (and the only ones the author remembers) intently edited into the film are the woman on a motorbike uphill (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:24 Min.) and the woman in a ricksha to the hospital (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 22:19 Min.). Both scenes are natural and occur

precisely like this, on this location, in this way but unfortunately did not happen entirely spontaneous, when I currently filmed there.

The “three-delay model that was developed for maternal mortality” (Calvello et al., 2015, p. 417 [online]) invoked in the film by Hadiza Galadanci (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:11 Min.) “focused on the three main factors that affected the outcome of emergency presentation during pregnancy” (Calvello et al., 2015, p. 418 [online]) was hence mandatory to integrate into the film.

In corollary, a scene of a woman serendipitously reaching the hospital through the rudimentary infrastructure and catastrophic road conditions (i.e. the second delay = “the identification of – and transport to – a medical facility”, Calvello et al., 2015, p. 418 [online]) was needed to accommodate this.

As a last resort, our travel group asked women and drivers who reached the hospitals like that to re-enact/redo it in the same manner for the camera. These were the only two actually arranged re-enacted/staged scenes aside from filming scenes where unequivocally organised group pictures (as explained at the beginning of Part 1 in this chapter above) or respective videos were taken.

Aside from that, I would like to recognise that I undoubtedly intervened with reality and affected scenes, protagonists and interviewees alike in multiple ways, invariably intending to foster and cherish the charitable enterprise. These influential factors range from involuntary and passively triggered behavioural changes of individuals appearing in front of a camera, via interaction with protagonists through encouraging efforts by myself to asking people to redo simple actions (e.g. open a door) or wait for me to capture the scene adequately. They also contained arranging travel group pictures or videos and cheering on collaborative actions such as musical performances (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 30:09 Min.), which are customary anyhow.

Conclusively, this segment wants to claim that it is imperative for values such as reliability, conscientiousness, trustworthiness, righteousness, respectability and arguably so also for inciting donations if illustrations within a film are approximating the truthful, non-fictitious, honest, and believable end of the spectrum.

Here are several possibilities for audiences to estimate or evaluate the authenticity, realism, and allocation within their described spectra. In the context of this thesis, these would apply to my film and “altruistic filmmaking” in general.

Following Hißnauer’s (2011, pp. 117-138) “semio-pragmatics of >authentic< representations” [translated by the author] and his table 1 (ibid., pp. 133-134) in

particular, there are a variety of “signals of authenticity” [translated by the author] (regarding “inserted footage”, “sound”, “camera strategies”, “persons” incl. “experts”, “commentary” and “other authenticity signals” [all quoted terms translated by the author]; *ibid.*, pp. 133-134).

Among the authenticity signals (that Hißnauer, 2011, pp. 133-134 has compiled) which are incorporated in my RFPD production – and maybe found via analysis thereof – are, for example, the depiction of authentic “document[s] (letters, files, etc.)” (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, TC 15:47 - 16:04 Min.), use of “original synchronous sound” (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, TC 25:12 - 25:22 Min.), “statements and interviews with participants/witnesses” (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, TC 18:27 - 19:04 Min.), “colloquial language/dialect colouring” (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, TC 03:50 - 04:05 Min.), “statements by experts” (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, TC 15:30 - 15:42 Min.), and the employment of “deepening redundancy” [all quoted terms translated by the author] (cf. Hißnauer, 2011, pp. 133-134) while the premeditated effect of the last – according to Hißnauer (*ibid.*, p. 134) – is “authentication by emphasising repetition” [translated by the author]. The film also makes frequent use of “tables, charts and graphs” [translated by the author] that Hißnauer (2011, p. 134) equally highlighted, claiming that their “rhetoric/intended effect” is to “suggest objectivity/scientificity” [all quotes translated by the author].

Of course, signalling authenticity (as elaborated via these examples) is not the same as representing axiomatic facts or immutable reality, but these signals are intended to move the believability and the impression of authenticity and add to a realistic character of a documentary. Attaining the latter results would arguably be enough (in this context) for “altruistic filmmaking’s” purposes as it is irrelevant to the (immediate) possible ensuing audience reaction and action (e.g. donation, support, volunteering) if something the audience believes to be authentic is actually factual or not. Yet, from an “altruistic filmmaker’s” perspective, they should, of course, abide by moral and ethical standards (as iterated, e.g. in section 1. 1. of the thesis) and should, in the best case, disclose their motivations, relationships, process and representation of interests (among other things) and should not only signal or radiate authenticity, but ideally present independently verifiable content (as far as they can assess and judge this themselves and where applicable).

7. 13. Cinematography, Proxemics and Composition

As (perceptions of) distances and spatial constellations in filmmaking and analysis thereof play a momentous role, this thesis will follow the description by Winfried Nöth (1990) in the *Handbook of Semiotics* about “Hall (1963a; b) [who] coined the term *proxemics* from the Latin root *prox-* (as in *proximity*) and the suffix *-emic* (as in *systemic*, *phonemic*).” (Nöth, 1990, p. 411). Regarding “Categories of Proxemic Analysis” (ibid.), “Hall proposes three categories of proxemic description, distance, space, and a third category which comprises the modes of behavior and perception (...).” (ibid.) While exact distance measures may vary by culture (cf. ibid.), this thesis acknowledges that “the distances according to Hall are (1) *intimate distance* (...), (2) *personal distance* (...), (3) *social distance* (...), and (4) *public distance* (...)” (ibid.) that all have their visual representations in shots and cohesive scenes across my RFPD documentary.

Since the pictured distances play a notable role in how the audience perceives their affinity with people portrayed on screen, I have aspired for my RFPD documentary to connect with them via preference of (cinematographically) closer, i.e. more *intimate* or *personal* (see quote above) relatively perceived distances, that have typically also been recorded at close or very close absolute (i.e. physical) distances. This conscious choice and awareness of close-distance relevance reflect in close-ups or extreme close-ups and visualisations of medical and technical equipment (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 17:15 Min., or from TC 17:46 Min.), compelling interview sections (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 05:19 Min., or from TC 25:38 Min.), energising dancing scenes and musical performances (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 16:48 Min., or from TC 25:46 Min.) and mother and child representations (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 00:52 Min., from TC 18:31 Min., from TC 24:18 Min., or from TC 29:46 Min.) alike.

The latter three of which not only make use of this *intimate* or *personal* (see quote above) physical realm, distance and compacted perception (incl. spatial framing) but also foreshadow and comprise an extension to the understanding of proxemics as “para-proxemics” (Bousé, 2011, p. 226), which “[a]s defined by Meyrowitz (1986)(...) combines Horton’s and Wohl’s concept of ‘para-social relationships’ with Hall’s notion of ‘proxemic’ spatial relations. The argument is that we respond psychologically to media figures based on the perceived interpersonal distance at which we encounter them on the screen—that is, on the basis of the proxemic zone (intimate, personal, social, or public) in which they *appear* to be located, as determined by their size in relation to the television frame.” (ibid.) Briefly summarised, the intention in my film (which arguably may be adaptable/replicable by “altruistic filmmaking” in general) is

that the subjects depicted prominently and up close in the frame (i.e. cinematographically) should be perceived psychologically nearer on an interpersonal level (see quote above), which in turn should serve to facilitate and promote Smith's (2004) "alignment" (as elaborated in div. sections, e.g. 4. 1. in general, 7. 7.) with these people or groups of people, predominantly mothers and children through and throughout the narration.

Consequently, aspects that attest to the style, proxemics and composition within the film are, for example, repetitive filming in proximity (i.e. close distance and regularly espousing close-up shots) and preferentially deploying resulting takes in concatenated edited sequences (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 29:46 Min.). Moreover, these are captures of "in the moment" - "flow"-like (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) experiences as a one-man-band filmmaker (e.g. cf. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009) with a slightly unstable documentary-style camera aesthetic.

The latter happens to be similar (but often less shaky due to personal preferences) to various of the on-location shots and the description of Rossi's handheld approach (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]) in *Before the Flood* (2016) - see the extensive exploration in appendix A below.

Nowadays, consumers and film enthusiasts are accustomed to assigning dramaturgical design sovereignty to point-of-view shots. Nevertheless, the integration of a POV mode felt very natural. It inherently substantiates the intent to deliver uninterrupted, non-orchestrated, and unfiltered rawness connatural to how documenting catastrophes routinely performs.

Reichelt (2010), for example, vividly, fragmentarily and travel diary-like describes the – for a reader – seemingly countless filterless and brute impressions when documenting crises in disaster regions like the horrific 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. This unadulterated immediacy approach (chiefly when published uncut/unabridged) also correlates to earlier findings on the "observational" mode (Nichols, 1985a) and forms of video activism while it provides for capturing what happens to the volunteering group in the RFPD film unconditionally.

Wherever and whenever a shallow depth-of-field accompanying this approach aids to achieve a visually appealing cinematic look, the cameras were outfitted with fast lenses and large aperture sizes. This lens selection eminently helped to frequently operate focus transitions with the mother and child imagery (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 00:46 Min.) and equally the disturbing, disheartening world of images (e.g.

RFPD documentary, from TC 02:06 Min.) both outlined in the ensuing two sections further along.

7. 14. Patterns, Symbolism and Metaphorical Expressions and their Interrelationships with Emotional Responses and Cognitive Biases

Briefly revisiting some widely-used terms and concepts, this thesis adopts (and transposes) the ensuing definition of a “metaphor” as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (as in *drowning in money*)” (Merriam-Webster – Metaphor, 2023, p. 1 [online]). Transposed to film, this would be “[a] visual metaphor [that] is the representation of a person, place, thing, or idea by means of a visual image that suggests a particular association or point of similarity. It’s also known as pictorial metaphor and analogical juxtaposition.” (Nordquist, 3rd February 2018, p. 1 [online]) Where required, I would include auditive components such as music, speech and sound effects into the definition for an “audiovisual metaphor” in films.

As a “symbol”, this thesis typically understands “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance” (Merriam-Webster – Symbol, 2023, p. 1 [online]).

Predominant examples of symbolical and metaphorical scenes are close-ups of women and their young children. These were recorded in multiple differentiable interactions but at best in a health care environment and quite intimately familiar (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 24:02 Min.), signifying a robust family linkage that resonates, shapes spectator retention and stimulates solidarity. These are recurring examples of figurative and emotionally aggregating visuals across the film, in this case representing the memorable archetypal portrayal of the leitmotiv “Maternal and Child Health”.

Of course, this recurring “mother and child” imagery evokes “The Caregiver” (e.g. cf. Pearson, 1991) archetype. The Neo-Jungian author Carol S. Pearson (1991) defined it like this: “The ideal of the Caregiver is the perfect, caring parent—generative, loving, attentive to noticing and developing the child’s talents and interests, so devoted to this new life that he or she would die, if necessary, that it might thrive.” (Pearson, 1991, p. 108)

The assessment that this archetype is evoked here can be derived because ancient typically human instincts, acquired and instilled norms of behaviour and patterns (and normally also values) gathered from one’s life experiences since early childhood are triggered here. In probably the majority of cultures worldwide, the living

environment of growing children counts as particularly worthy of support and protection.

Since humans all have an individual complex web of associations with motherhood, this recurring portrayal not just directly depicts examples of or constitutes “The Caregiver” (e.g. cf. Pearson, 1991) archetype but also abstracts to or symbolises all those linkages, concepts and actions that viewers harbour or recollect when confronted with “The Caregiver” (cf. *ibid.*). That way, audiences may witness more than just a mother and her child. They could have mental connections and associations with, for instance, general concepts such as unconditional love, more broadly parenting, or a selfless person that does not necessarily have to be a mother but which could also conjure remembrance of a priest, godparent or other helping figure (e.g. which shaped the viewers’ own lives).

Other juxtapositions of repeated symbolic representations are imagery depicting social life, the health care system and its periphery, polyclinics, chemist’s shops, and more. Together these form a multi-sensory simile to imitate third-world living conditions of women and children (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 00:34 Min.; from TC 20:24 Min.; or from TC 20:44 Min.) and particularly their needs, indigence, adversity, and struggles while contrasting it with their exhilarating, dynamic, energetic, lavish, and cheerful revelries (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 25:47 Min.; or from TC 26:24 Min.). This rhetorical figure (here: pictorially and auditory) juxtaposed as contradictory “cheerful adversity” or “exhilarating struggles” of life matches an aesthetic of an audiovisual semiotic oxymoron.

In this context, the thesis assumes the MasterClass.com definition of an oxymoron: “An oxymoron is a figure of speech: a creative approach to language that plays with meaning and the use of words in a non-literal sense. This literary device combines words with contradictory definitions to coin a new word or phrase. The incongruity of the resulting statement allows writers to play with language and meaning.” (MasterClass.com – Writing 101: What Is an Oxymoron?, 2021, p. 1 [online]) It is reasonable to argue to transpose this notion to the domain or language of filmmaking readily. Many scholars have argued that filmmaking is a language with inherent grammar, such as *Grammar of the Film Language* by Arijon (1991); thus, it seems appropriate to utilise deduced figures of speech transferred to film.

Consequently, the above audiovisual semiotic oxymoron in the RFPD documentary underscores and increases the attention towards, significance, and sense-making of both worlds contrasted here. Although a more precise classification of cognitive biases is given a bit further below, it could be argued that this contrasting

representation (i.e. the oxymoron) described above is recurrently leaning on at least one bias, the “salience bias” (e.g. cf. Kahneman, Slovic & A. Tversky, 1982).

According to Daniel Kahneman, Paul Slovic and Amos Tversky (1982), “[s]alience biases refer to the fact that colorful, dynamic, or other distinctive stimuli disproportionately engage attention and accordingly disproportionately affect judgements.” (Kahneman, Slovic & A. Tversky, 1982, p. 192)

One could argue that the oxymoronic structure and contrasting features of displaying both the toils, issues and tribulations on the one hand and dances, merriments and festivities on the other even increase their already existing colourfulness, vigour, impetus and distinctiveness relative to not contrasting them. Thereby, it increasingly relies on the “salience bias” (e.g. cf. Kahneman, Slovic & A. Tversky, 1982) that subsequently helps to “disproportionately engage attention” (Kahneman, Slovic & A. Tversky, 1982, p. 192) for the depicted matter.

Although this may appear paradoxical, the real-life portrayals from Nigeria are essentially only vistas of the richly complex and perhaps for an outsider ostensibly inconsistent realm of life that the RFPD tour group genuinely encountered.

Such metaphoric levels equivalent to figurative language in literary science epitomise a virtual storyline in the spectators’ minds as a narrative between the lines.

Chapter four of this doctoral thesis has iterated the more or less absence of scientific research results on emotional responses in film studies, as Greg M. Smith (2003) proclaims. This estimation is notably even more remarkable regarding the deficiency of controlled, randomised, replicable, systematic quantitative research in this body of knowledge. All the more so, there are specific moments in movies, as per Jeff Smith (2015), that “are of particular interest to film scholars in that they show how filmmakers can exploit particular types of cognitive biases in order to create effects of curiosity, suspense, and surprise among audience members.” (Smith, J., 2015, p. 485)

Likewise, this thesis wants to reiterate that it is the story submerged into the subconscious or into the fleeting semiconscious thoughts and feelings that initiate emotional reactions and heavily influence decision-making and human agency. Notoriously extreme examples are horror films.

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman (1973) have revolutionised social psychology with their contributions regarding heuristics and biases. These are still underrated and, importantly, under-researched in film sciences. In restating this research gap, this study wants to highlight and push anew that it would be exciting to see formalistic methodical

(quantitative) studies in film academia regarding cognitive biases, dissonances and heuristics.

According to Phillip T. Erickson (2020), “there are hundreds of cognitive biases that interfere with one’s ability to think rationally.” (Erickson, 2020, p. 10) As such, they are “a systematic deviation from logic – from optimal, rational, reasonable thought and behaviour (...) [which] are not just occasional errors in judgement, but rather routine mistakes, barriers to logic we stumble over time and again, repeating patterns through generations and through the centuries.” (Dobelli, 2013, p. 2) When examining typical well-known online databases, those biases (and related logical fallacies) are differently well understood, scientifically characterised, and investigated, while many of them are currently under further exploration.

In consideration of Rüdiger F. Pohl (2012), the original, influential research and statements of Tversky & Kahneman (1974) sparked the notion of a “heuristics and biases’ approach [that] led to an enormous number of studies investigating the intricacies of human judgement (...) which in turn affected scholarship in economics, law, medicine, management, and political science.” (Pohl, 2012, p. 10)

Some authors, like Murat Durmus’ (2022) *COGNITIVE BIASES - A Brief Overview of Over 160 Cognitive Biases* and Rolf Dobelli’s (2013) *The Art of Thinking Clearly*, have made substantial concerted efforts to increase awareness amongst the general public of this far-reaching field of research, which has a profound practical significance for life and is constantly evolving.

As such, this fairly extensive sphere of research can naturally only be addressed and integrated here in a somewhat introductory and simplistic way, including the mentioning of already recognisable examples, pointing out the relevance of the research topic dealt with here, and further inspiring research around the connection of biases and dissonances with film studies.

In this context, it is expedient to note how biases can affect filmmaking in general and altruistic filmmaking in particular since this underscores its relevance to the topic researched. As the biases at least affect human thinking, judgement and memory in various ways, they can affect filmmaking in many areas. I will shortly outline which areas could be affected, share a prime example of how they could be affected and explain why this is relevant and should lead to more research around (altruistic) filmmaking and biases.

As human beings are prone to mental shortcuts (i.e. “heuristics”), errors in judgement and biases, those could affect the filmmaker (and crew), the interviewees, (screen) characters, extras and bystanders, and the spectators on many levels. Thus, all parts

of the production process, including editing and distribution, could be affected in various ways.

The following is a prime example of the above effects to further consider in this thesis. As Daniel Västfjäll, Paul Slovic, Marcus Mayorga and Ellen Peters (2014) study in their article “Compassion Fade: Affect and Charity Are Greatest for a Single Child in Need” (Västfjäll et al., 2014), they “propose and test the hypothesis that the needs of others induce affective feelings, and that donors often experience the strongest feelings for a single identified person in need” (Västfjäll et al., 2014, p. 1). In aggregate they assess that “[t]he results from four studies show that affective feelings about charitable causes were strongest for a single endangered person and began to decline as the number in danger grew larger.” (Västfjäll et al., 2014, p. 7)

In conclusion, this means that their “results suggest that people begin to lose affective attachment as the number in need increases. We argue that it may be natural and relatively easy to empathize and feel compassion with a single identified individual, but that it is difficult to ‘scale up’ this emotion when we need to consider more than one individual.” (ibid.)

In the wake of these findings, it seems valuable to assess for each “altruistic film” whether it could make sense to readjust the narrative to prefer “featuring” a single person (here: child) in need, narrating their unique story compassionately and thus increasing forms of support and donations, per those research findings.

While this process and narrative might apply to some “altruistic films”, it did not apply to my RFPD film. Real-world projects like my film sometimes aim to educate and inform about the history, efforts, and prospects of the charitable organisation, its proponents and progress. This educational approach, of course, comes with limitations as some objectives cannot be aligned with a “single child in need” (see article title above, Västfjäll et al., 2014) focussed storyline.

Nevertheless, this extended example of and research about one particular bias (among hundreds of existing ones and probably many more yet to discover) and its possible effects on “altruistic filmmaking” highlights the necessity for further exploration of biases in conjunction with documentary filmmaking in general and “altruistic filmmaking” in particular. Please note that decision-makers of any production should also constantly scrutinise whether the employment or “exploitation” of heuristics and biases could be possibly ethically questionable and should thus be discarded.

In conclusion, many existing biases could substantially blind the filmmaker and crew, influence their judgement, and affect the documentary they are creating. Some biases

could shroud the participants' minds or actions (such as those of the screen characters, extras or bystanders) and influence the audience's reception of any documentary. Some of the most common biases to further research would include but exceed the "availability bias" (e.g. Dobelli, 2013) and "confirmation bias" (ibid.).

Logically, this thesis proposes deeper research in film psychology, e.g. into "anthropomorphism" (Colman, 2015, p. 43), considering the emotionalising role of depicted volitionally (inter-)acting animals or other non-human entities, all with ascribed human faculties or traits or into "attentional bias" (Baron, 2008) when affecting perception or judgements. The "bandwagon effect" (Colman, 2015, p. 77) concerning usage of renowned believable experts or the "Dunning–Kruger effect" (Kruger & Dunning, 1999) relating to audiences deeming themselves superior in solving complications within a given film would be evenly worth exploring. What are the correlating psychological ramifications? Avowedly, there are extensive enumerations of reproducible deviations from rationality keenly awaiting film research.

7. 15. Personal Handwriting: Signature Style Shots & Psychological Foundations

Some of the presumably and hopefully most agitating and soulful shots of the RFPD film that are intentionally devised as emotionally charged are the recurring reactions and impressions of children and babies (with their mothers). They are often candidly gazing straight at the camera, are curious and understand that they are watched. (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 23:10 Min.) By utilising the POV mode of the cameraman, these impressions intend to approximate real-life encounters as if the audience would, for instance, step into the maternity ward in preponderantly secondary or tertiary hospitals in provincial African territories.

These sequences and arrangements purposefully evoke or induce a subjective resemblance of "cuteness" (e.g. cf. Glocker et al., 2009). Their architecture and design thereby pay tribute to and rely heavily on what the Nobel Prize winner and ethologist Lorenz (1971) denominated as the "Kindchenschema" (German; i.e. the "baby schema"). According to its definition, discrete puerile or infantile corporeal forms and especially head proportions, including facial characteristics of animals and humans alike, classify or categorise them as "cute". (Glocker et al., 2009; Van Duuren et al., 2003; Schneider, 2013 [online])

Borgi et al. (2014 [online]) in their research article in "Frontiers in Psychology", have found that "faces with a modified infantile facial configuration (round face, high

forehead and big eyes, small nose and mouth) were perceived as cuter than those with less infantile traits.” (Borgi et al., 2014, p. 9 [online])

Several studies, publications (e.g. Bogin, 1997; Van Duuren et al., 2003), and the originator Lorenz (1971) demonstrate that such stereotypical cuteness (i.e. its morphology) and appearance initiates other humans’ (and animals’) sense of caregiving, nurturing, and admiring these toddlers or newborns as charming or adorable. (Bogin, 1997; Van Duuren et al., 2003; Schneider, 2013 [online])

These primal distinctive innate attributes, repeatedly presented with activating baby pictures as foci within signature shots throughout the film (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 03:30 Min.), are intended to generate stirring emotional responses while reflecting a prevalent theme in universal charity work. This theme encompasses heartfelt sympathy and compassion for human beings as well as an emphasis on the omnipresent marvellous specificity of the human condition. International charities like SOS-Kinderdörfer weltweit, Save the Children, UNICEF, Orphans in Need, and World Vision – among myriad others – have banked on and trusted children face photo or video campaigning in the past.

Thus, one can argue that those psychological mechanisms such as the “baby schema” (“Kindchenschema”) (cf. Lorenz, 1971) are not solely relevant to and can not only give countenance to this particular RFPD film. Additionally, they are widespread among to be described other charity films and should complement every film practitioner’s toolkit as archetypical in the framework for altruistic filmmaking. They are worthwhile instruments to spur virtues such as cordiality, clemency, munificence, largesse and benignancy. With the proper modes of editing, such stylistic devices can forcefully influence the focusing, dramatising and emphasising effects of scenes and thus their memorability and the affection of the audience.

Typically, scenes such as vulnerable babies on their backs kicking or toddlers being fed (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 03:30 Min.), or underdeveloped neonates, premature infants or extra-small toddlers (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 24:20 Min.) are prime examples that can elicit such results. Other resonating stereotypes include captures of weeping, mourning or anguished children.

Striking prominent exemplars are the almost infamous iconic portraits of half-naked, barefoot, filthy and injured starved “skin and bones” children with bloated bellies in tattered rags. This last description owes its partly inglorious notoriety to its emblematic extreme exaggeration but is nevertheless highly pervasive in public charity advertising. Consciously such overly severe hyperbolic pictures of wounded, impaired, disfigured or terminally ill offspring from the extremity of the scale that viewers perhaps customarily await from war and crisis reporting or the tabloid press are not part of the

RFPD film as the greatheartedness of the cause would quite plausibly not sustain any undignified or degrading content. This decision is also an unmistakable affirmation to advocate firmly that the end does not justify all means.

Aside from the visually compelling images of children's faces, the RFPD film also heavily relies on contrasting compositions and the "montage of attractions" [translated] (Eisenstein, 2006) by attempting to conceive pictures in the viewers' minds in a more sophisticated way. Examples are to contrast sorely afflicted women and perforce deplorable children of the film's exposition (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 00:34 Min. to 01:19 Min.) to the devastating health care technology (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 02:03 Min.), defunct roads and infrastructure, rundown dwellings and other trials and tribulations of living a hard life in the third world.

According to Eisenstein's (2019) theory, "[a]n attraction (...) is (...) any demonstrable fact (an action, an object, a phenomenon, a conscious combination, and so on) that is known and proven to exercise a definite effect on the attention and emotions of the audience and that, combined with others, possesses the characteristic of concentrating the audience's emotions in any direction dictated by the production's purpose." (Eisenstein, 2019, p. 5)

An example from the index of such phenomena that is provable and has been substantiated over decades of research (e.g. about "cuteness", cf. Glocker et al., 2009) is the employment and effects of the "baby schema" ("Kindchenschema") (cf. Lorenz, 1971). Other general examples include but exceed the research and findings about methods concerning "persuasion" (e.g. cf. Cialdini, 1984, 1993, 2007, 2016, 2021; Borchers, 2013), the "similarity-attraction effect" (Karremans & Finkenauer, 2021), cognitive biases and stereotyping.

Arguably, an instance in the RFPD film where such "attractions" are deliberately directing the viewership's emotions, combining some known above effects and phenomena through conjunction or juxtaposing audiovisuals, and thereby possibly concocting mental associations is the following elucidated analysis with proposed interpretations:

One such example is the connection between the montage sequence before but especially after Obiora Ike's speech part and the segment itself: "As we sit here in this hall and enjoy this dignified audience, 40.000 children die every day, 40.000. And they die because they have no food, and they have no water, and they have no medication." (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 01:37 Min. to 01:58 Min.; highlighted for emphasis)

Firstly, the likely intentional oratory practice of knowingly impactful repetitive and thus persuasive nature of the above text section, combined with Ike's rhythmic, sermon-style, educational and gravitas-emanating presentational form, is powerful and could even potentially conjure images involving stereotypes of hungry, thirsty and sick children in the viewer's mind. Ike is thereby already using associative language that is reflected in juxtaposing imagery.

Ike's commanding, compassionate rhetoric, which attempts to establish a direct relationship between the viewer and the children, calls for attention and commiseration and urges the local festive society and, through the "similarity-attraction effect" (e.g. cf. Karremans & Finkenauer, 2021), the affluent Western viewer in particular, to self-reflect (through the similarity of previously experienced events and perhaps already harboured comparable reflective thoughts). In doing so, it can generate and reinforce a sentiment in the spectator that they are comparatively well off while others in specific groups of people are faring poorly. This rhetoric coupling can elicit a feeling of guilt in the viewer or deliberately make the viewer uncomfortable and thus function as a call to action or obligate the audience to take decisive action by persuading them not to ignore the hardship and suffering of others. In other words, it could spark or (re)invigorate altruistic behaviour.

This homily is then juxtaposed or put in conjunction with the ensuing montage sequence, contrasting the celebratory society with conditions in rural Nigeria. To say it in Eisenstein's (2019) words, "[f]or the exposition of even the simplest phenomena cinema needs juxtaposition (by means of consecutive, separate presentation) between the elements which constitute it: montage (in the technical, cinematic sense of the word) is fundamental to cinema, deeply grounded in the conventions of cinema and the corresponding characteristics of perception." (Eisenstein, 2019, p. 36) The montage sequence then integrates imagery of mothers with babies in their arms looking apprehensive/expectant, unsettling or disturbing shots of spilt medications and unhygienic medical devices and equipment, unclean and repelling visuals of a basin, hospital beds and a conglomeration of unusable-looking medical-technical devices, which are scattered across and littering an incubator. (cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 01:58 Min. to 02:25 Min.) These worlds of images inevitably impinge on our personal experiences of mothers and children, hospitals, washing facilities and bedrooms from our everyday reality, which invariably clash with what is portrayed.

Visually combined in this way, the weight of the speaker's words should usually trigger heightened attention and prompt ideas in the viewer's mind about how mothers and children have to resort to such washing facilities, how children are given birth in these environments, and how they are brought up, cared for and treated under medical

circumstances which would be highly unpleasant or unbearable for many Western observers.

This montage sequence is supposed to engender emotional reactions and usually concern and compassion in correlation with discomfort at the thought of having to encounter analogous circumstances personally. In the best case with regards to the intention, this and other montage sequences across the documentary would contribute to the overarching goal of the film, which includes supporting the charity with financial, awareness-raising or volunteer service (among other forms of backing). In any case, the latter description was the intention of the editing. This intent fits well with the theoretical description of the montage technique: “The montage of attractions – an effective way of producing semantic meaning – is characterized by the effects (attractions) with a precise aim of specific final thematic effect that the montage can produce. The montage of attractions is the contrasting comparisons that often produce a powerful emotional effect.” (Gambarato, 2010, pp. 110-111)

Of course, this chain of reasoning cannot rule out that different groups of spectators with varying kinds of experience, understanding, backgrounds and knowledge may mentally associate the pictorial worlds varyingly and hence may experience deviating but hopefully equally compassionate emotions towards the mothers and children or variants of this perception that ultimately result in support for the charitable organisation.

More of the aforementioned intense and likewise signature style shots representing the handwriting of the practitioner in this film are disruptive or unsettling recordings around the topic of the dark side of quotidian health care like syringes, blood remnants, women suffering from labour pains, medical equipment deteriorated to the point of uselessness, and rundown places (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:41 Min.).

Striking model examples of dilapidated premises are typical hospital facilities such as a pharmacy, treatment rooms or maternity wards that are actually in perpetual use. Some of these looked incredibly wretched and discouraging that it was especially obnoxious and repulsive while incredulously fascinating to film them. (e.g. RFPD documentary, from TC 02:03 Min.; or from TC 10:31 Min.; or from TC 11:48 Min.) It is worrisome to imagine the de facto utilisation of the uncovered medications and pills, non-sterilised surgical instruments and other scuffed therapeutic equipment displayed across the documentary. These are deployed repeatedly, not as disposables and without in-depth cleaning, disinfection or autoclaves as compulsory in the western

civilisation. Of course, nothing in these captures was arranged or altered in any way for the film. It looked exactly like this.

7. 16. Experts & Protagonists: Convincing with Authority

Engaging experts and protagonists as speakers, interview partners or depicted acting figures of the film (and their functions like radiating “authority”, cf. chapter four; Cialdini, 2007, 2021) is another recurrent approach across findings. Such patterns may be chiefly derived from apposite examples (such as *Planet RE:think*, 2012; *The Age of Aluminium*, 2013; *The Price of Fairness*, 2017) and the systematic *Before the Flood* (2016) film breakdown in appendix A.

The RFPD film is laden with such luminaries of their respective fields, ranging from executives via governors, to gynaecologists, to a cleric to additional stakeholders and parties concerned. Their conjunct endeavours, allotted responsibilities, accounts of the systemic and scholarly background knowledge on maternal and child health in Nigeria, and resulting joint accomplishments and future aspirations round off the film’s narration.

Consequently, they arguably embody what Cialdini (2007, 2021) names “consistency” that is at the bedrock of constituting credence. Experiencing and encountering prosocial behaviour of such respected and reputable authorities will again possibly lead to “recognition” (cf. Smith, 2004), especially by the film’s target groups listed in sections 1. 4. or 5. 1. above, since “reliable access to the character’s state of mind” (ibid., p. 84) (etc.) is comprehensibly provided as exemplified before. Together with the eloquent speeches and explications by some pundits such as Galadanci, Ike, and Zinser and substantiated by observable, publicly verifiable evidence, corresponding project documentation (of RFPD) and also additional features of Hißnauer’s (2011, pp. 117-138) “semio-pragmatics of >authentic< representations” [translated by the author] (see, e.g. likewise in section 7. 8. and 7. 12. above) this also enables “alignment” (cf. Smith, 2004) with the persons as analogously explained in general in section 4. 1. above.

The intended perception of typical authority characteristics (like radiated expertise or proficiency, standing, professions, titles and roles) and the explanations of rhetoric, behaviour and activities (e.g. service, contributions, fostering, training programmes), as well as their distinct portrayals in the film, form an overall perception of these subjects conjoined with the analysed intended characteristics described in previous sections. This general perception, which also includes representations of caring, prudent, benevolent, well-considered (i.e. conceptually underpinned), kind and

arguably imitable behaviour, should accordingly together again be able to engender “allegiance” (cf. Smith, 2004) in some of the target groups mentioned above before inviting them to partake and unselfishly contribute.

Many experts such as nurses, physicians, midwives, gynaecologists and obstetricians, project managers and statisticians and similar experts have been chosen on the assumption to be competent, believable, trustworthy, suasive, and to enunciate (not yet falsified) facts with integrity, honesty and knowledge-based.

What they state conveys their “commitment” to the issue and outcome, what and how they communicate (i.e. how to meliorate protection for mothers and children) instigates “liking” and who they are, connotes a status of “authority” that coactive with their credentials and public verifiability bestows “social proof”. (cf. “commitment”, “authority”, “liking”, “social proof”; see chapter four above; Cialdini, 2007, 2021)

Examples rationalised from the narratology behind *Before the Flood* (2016) and its film analysis in appendix A highlight more particulars about such experts’ role in charity filmmaking.

7. 17. Stereotyping & Representation of “Others”

My RFPD documentary deals with the happenings, transformations, developments and expansions of a charity project in Nigeria, a country with a colonial history which the British Empire governed until its independence on 1st October 1960 (cf. Encyclopedia Britannica – Nigeria, 2023 [online]). This section aligns with and builds upon earlier explications under 1. 6. and 5. 4. of the thesis. Thus, it may be valuable to the reader to consider possible aspects of and relationships with academic texts around postcolonialism or postcolonial theory as explored by significant representative authors, such as John McLeod (2010), Leela Gandhi (2019), and Robert J. C. Young (2020).

In this section, I will briefly discuss some related elucidations and reflections concerning the practice project and share further information about the filmmaking process. While doing so, I would like to point out once again that various dependencies, conditions and limitations exerted an influence on the production process and, consequently, the outcome.

An undoubtedly incomplete list includes my dependence as a single documentary filmer, shooting while dependent upon the travel plans of the RFPD group (while in Nigeria), predetermined schedules and appointments (mostly outside of my influence), physical access to destinations, venues, then-current participants in the

project and all the concomitant possibilities, proceedings and organisational structures (of RFPD and the on-site travel). While in Nigeria, I generally followed/shadowed Robert Zinser and his travel group on the main trips, encountered the people, events, activities, and meetings they did and tried to get interviews, comments, and statements wherever and whenever possible within a tightly executed trip but generally just documented whatever happened and could be videoed. More creative opportunities have fortunately arisen during convention/conference/review meeting dates, where I could interview individual experts and pundits during breaks or outside the programme for filming purposes.

Based on the realities and circumstances in terms of time, space and individuals within the project and reachable on location, I have endeavoured to thoughtfully compile a carefully balanced presentation of the project from the copious footage accumulated from several journeys and conferences spanning many years. Simultaneously, I sought to avoid oversimplifications and stigmatising stereotypes (through complex, educational, expert- and source-based, balanced, multifaceted, multifarious footage with diverse voices from numerous mixed locations) and never negatively exaggerate my on-site impressions. In addition, I intended to incorporate imagery and figures of various involved groups (e.g. of different sex/gender, ages, origins, cultures, operational fields, religious and scientific/medical representatives, etc.) justifiably and harmoniously while contributing to the narration, and to counteract undesirable stigmatising stereotypes (insofar I was aware of them and where this was even controllable through the film and not – predominantly – reliant on every individual viewer perception/motivation/background/attitude and other exogenous factors). Some appurtenant considerations are also addressed in sections 7. 15. and 7. 18.

Since it can never be ruled out that stereotypes could be observed, depicted, touched upon, alluded to or drawn from in a cross-cultural, inter-religious, multilingual, transregional and supranational project, here is a consideration of such items, narrowed down to key insights surrounding the “white saviour” trope owing to the space limitations of the thesis.

The cinematic “White Saviour” trope

A trope encountered frequently in film theory is that of the so-called “white saviour”, which has a lengthy history enmeshed (albeit critical) with postcolonial theory and was genealogically previously delineated via different terms: “Terms such as ‘noble savage,’ ‘manifest destiny,’ ‘white man’s burden,’ and ‘great white hope’ refer to previous iterations of the complex relationship between the tropes of the white savior and the dysfunctional and dark ‘other’ in need of saving.” (Hughey, 2014, p. 8)

Prominent examples, according to Hughey (2014), “include *Conrack* (1974), *Glory* (1989), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *Dangerous Minds* (1996), *Sunset Park* (1996), *Amistad* (1997), *Music of the Heart* (1999), *Finding Forrester* (2000), *Hardball* (2001), *The Last Samurai* (2003), *Half Nelson* (2006), *Gran Torino* (2008), *Avatar* (2009), *The Blind Side* (2009), and *The Help* (2011), to name just a few.” (Hughey, 2014, p. 8)

How is this trope conventionally explained, and what characteristics does it encompass?

Hughey (2014) puts it succinctly, “Hernán Vera and Andrew Gordon explain in *Screen Savors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness* that the white savior genre is recognizable through the presence of a white person as ‘the great leader who saves blacks from slavery or oppression, rescues people of color from poverty and disease, or leads Indians in battle for their dignity and survival’ (2003: 33).” (Hughey, 2014, p. 8)

Is the trope reflected in the RFPD documentary?

- 1) As an examination of the film and notably the names list under “FEATURING [line break] IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE” in the film’s end credits plainly shows, there is an undeniable preponderance of (distinguished) local figures (from various regions in Nigeria), both in speaking time, in prominence and overall presence in the film (i.e. screen time). For instance, 11 of 15, i.e. approx. 73.33 % of all persons under “FEATURING” are Nigerians. These have a hard-earned reputation, and list of achievements, various degrees and awards, and represent very proactive, knowledgeable, eloquent, accomplished, and self-propelling characters with pivotal contributions to RFPD in Nigeria (of course, among numerous other supporters in the decades-long history of the group) and are jointly themselves attaining solutions to the issues as presented in the film (purposely enumerated here with some of their multitudinous titles - insofar I am aware of them):

Msgr. Prof. Dr. Obiora F. Ike, Helen Adamu, Liyatu Esubihi, Dr. Kolawole Owoka, Eric Igweshi, Christiana Laniyan, Prof. Dr. Brian-D. Adinma, Prof. Dr. Hadiza Galadanci, Prof. Dr. Oladapo Shittu, Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Adedolapo Lufadeju, and Eucharía Oluchi Aneh.

Based on their appearance, attitude, positions, expertise, explications and (advanced leadership) roles, it should be abundantly clear to the audience that they and the people associated with them and the charity themselves crucially contribute to resolving depicted challenges. For example, this Chief

Midwife (RFPD-Project, Abuja), Project Chairman (RFPD-Project, Nigeria), Project Supervisor (RFPD), and Treasurer/Area Coordinator (RFPD), who is simultaneously the Co-Founder of RFPD, have all been major local figures in vital and influential roles.

Conclusively, if one includes every individual appearing in the documentary, such as local health commissioners, traditional rulers, representatives of the Nigerian Healthcare System, etc., the predominance in percentages and their total airtime and participation is even greater.

- 2) The film further demonstrates via its overall structure and brackets at the beginning and end and through Ike as the first and last speaker, who is positioned particularly prominent with his degrees, honours, competence, eloquent rhetoric and “commanding voice”, which all-in-all clearly indicates that no Westerners necessarily need to come to Nigeria to lecture/command/rescue the locals. Instead, the locals themselves are central protagonists in the film and tackle plus implement the insights, solutions and improvements themselves while cooperating with the international community, which diligently and comprehensively supports them. As a relevant side reminder, Rotary has members in over 200 countries/territories, so it is active nearly everywhere worldwide (e.g. cf. Schütt, 1st February 2022 [online]).
- 3) The group visuals and conference video sequences, as well as many of their featured speakers (e.g. from the RFPD Semi-Annual MCH Review Meeting 2015), reinforce that the majority of prominent figures (in addition to all the mothers and children) in the documentary are locals and that no Western protagonists are singled out or particularly emphasised more than locals as rescuers or saviours in the sense of the trope. In a big group shot (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 22:59 Min.), for instance, only three Germans can be seen anyway, barely emerging amongst the dozens of Nigerians in the frame and appearing rather subordinately in the depiction.
- 4) Scenes previously referenced where women in travail arrive at hospitals deserving assistance (e.g. cf. RFPD documentary, from TC 20:24 min., or from TC 22:19 min.) also exhibit no “white saviours” whatsoever, but exclusively dedicated and responsive aid from regional health care personnel and clinicians.
- 5) The characters providing integral portions of the narrative through interviews and speeches, thus having the longest total speaking time, are again predominantly Nigerians, and none of them is rendered vulnerable or in dire

need of rescue but is instead portrayed as vigorous, thoughtful, well informed, knowledgeable, competent, and determined.

- 6) The film arranges its core imagery and the overarching focus of its content on women and children which should become clear already in the no-voice opening sequence where mothers with their children appear in differing life situations. Slavery, oppression, diseases, etc., are not really dealt with, and the habitually vividly dressed women and children do not generally appear imminently in danger or distress (maybe except for the natural cause of being in labour pain, as stated above).

Overall, it is reasonable to conclude that 1. there is no omnipresent “white saviour” or equivalent (singled-out) hero(s), nor 2. are any Nigerians liberated or rescued from slavery, oppression (or the like), and 3. Westerners are largely represented in the film as devoted, hands-on and collaborative partners but with no superseding temporal, pictorial or spatial presence whatsoever. In any case, the account summarised here was the intention throughout my thinking and action.

The film is multi-perspectival, multi-layered (educationally) and not structured around the “white saviour” trope due to the film’s complexity, the representatives of different religions, diverse backgrounds, societal roles and professions, and participants from several countries with varied assignments from multifarious areas of the project. Moreover, It should be self-evident for an intercultural and international humanitarian project that both locals and non-locals distribute aid and financial support in my corresponding film and that there are naturally also appearances of the recipients, i.e. children and mothers, which are meant to instil sympathetic emotions in the viewers (possibly coming from virtually any country in the world, since Rotary alone already has a worldwide network) – because there are challenges to be solved and progress to be made. The documentary does not emphasise at all purely Western training measures, assistance, subsidies or activities, inasmuch as temporally and pictorially substantial motivational, conceptual, educational and comprehensive RFPD project-related content in the film, is explained by Ike, Galadanci, Lufadeju and Shittu, among others.

This RFPD documentary seeks to avoid spreading stereotypes of stigma, the “white saviour” trope, and others. Generalisations across the wide topic range of charity films (cf. section 5. 3. Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking”) appear inadequate and too far-reaching since such films may be viewed from around the world and stereotypes rely on various factors, sometimes entirely outside the filmmaker’s control.

They are likely deeply entwined with audience reception and may nevertheless be perceived differently and spark heterogeneous reactions. Conscious of that, as a filmmaker and practitioner, I am always open to constructive dialogue, glad about instructive insights and helpful feedback and reachable through various online communication channels.

It is therefore conceivable that spectators of different ages, backgrounds, traditions, heritage, nationalities, orientations, education levels, ethnicity, culture, experience, or even based on ever-changing and newly emerging movements or political, social or ideological currents, may evaluate, rank and perceive stereotypes within the narrative, imagery, individuals portrayed (or their selection, background and diversity), the chosen language, the statements, the compilation of facts or other factors differently over the decades. History recurrently shows that some ways things may be perceived in the future are almost impossible to estimate.

Overall, it is evident that whatever good intentions, personal relationships, history, arguments, motivations, efforts or explications any filmmaker brings to the table, none of us ultimately wields influence over the critique, evaluation, understanding or perception that viewers may develop when scrutinising a documentary like mine. In other words, it is clear that I, as the filmmaker, do not have control over possible interpretations and perceptions of the film. Regardless of what I communicate or how I act, audiences may still come to believe, e.g. that the activist group I support or even that I, as the filmmaker, through my endeavours to evoke sympathy for and generate backing and contributions to this charity project in Nigeria from their viewpoint, would resemble some variation of a “white saviour”.

This postcolonial trope and related stereotypes, concepts and notions frequently arise in public discourse about representations of “others”, e.g. African nations, cultures and associated subjects in Western societies. Thus, any such film could be interpreted in manifold ways in general and free socio-political discussions worldwide. As such, readings or comprehensions of the film could surface that a filmmaker like myself could neither predict nor counteract or avert.

7. 18. Limitations & Future Research

There are indisputably a number of dynamic ideas that would have been helpful to intersperse (with posthoc reasoning) yet, regardless, were not inwoven for heterogeneous reasons altogether. Moreover, there are invariably economic, artistic, practical, pragmatic, and additional interrelations that affect each film’s outcome.

Here are some additions to those constraints already listed in comparison to embedded journalism and crisis reporting above. Non-comprehensively these are, for instance, missing drone shots and interlocutors with limited charisma and expressiveness. Attentive and mindful towards stereotypes, the film industriously and peremptorily pursues to elude the cliché of too many influential rich old white men. Nonetheless, it would have been desirable to have still more women and, in particular, esteemed female pundits as interview partners or lecturers. With know-how procured in the compilation process, it would be instructive retrospectively to employ psychological effects and cognitive biases more. Optimistically, such findings may invigorate future research.

Overall, the RFPD film is a humble attempt at the approximation of my altruistic intentions in its making, a quest including previously highlighted limitations, constraints, influencing factors and likely some more undetected aspects. Although filters and other (un)intentional determinants might have affected the submitted film version, many lessons can be learned from the professional film practice, influencing theoretical elements and the film's reflection and analysis, especially with regard to altruistic filmmaking.

All of the cognitions in this chapter inform the compendium or conceptual framework of altruistic filmmaking.

Chapter Eight – Conclusion: Framework of “Altruistic Filmmaking”

8.1. Literature & Practice-Related Classification Attempt of a Framework of “Altruistic Filmmaking”

Current scientific literature (e.g. Hißnauer, 2011; Kuchenbuch, 2005; Hickethier, 2007) demonstrates that numerous elements classify, typify, objectify and describe non-fiction programmes.

Consequently, the accumulated systematic outline below is a valuable precondition and discussion basis of vocabulary, terminology and a descriptive framework to create a rule set that delineates borders that will help locate altruistic filmmaking within the interactive relationship of stylistic devices/aesthetics and production process (leveraging technological factors). Taxonomy and patterns are at their foundation.

Following is an attempt through this research project to create a framework of common delineators. These derive from the perspectives above, like aesthetics and production process and the review of documentary theory, literature, artistic film production, film analysis and case examples, presented in the scope of this thesis across the chapters.

Correspondingly, the link across the arc of the thesis to the three questions about the framework answered at the beginning of chapter one (i.e. elucidating the [1] outline/objective, [2] people/groups/organisations/scholars/etc. who may conceivably benefit and also [3] knowledge creation in related disciplines/occupations/domains) is once again established. These inquiries have accompanied the research throughout the thesis and conclude with the subsequent systematic elaboration.

Basic notions of Bettina Fromm (1999) on how to systematise, describe and categorise a format further influenced the process of shaping characteristics and determinants here. Her doctoral thesis originally circumscribed and defined the talk show as an intimate reality format. Some descriptive attributes have been adopted in the following in reference to, inferred from or inspired by Fromm (1999), e.g. considerations of the “topic selection and ranking” and “topic distribution” [translated by the author]. When reading Lünenborg et al. (2011), I was probably also influenced by the way in which characteristics and descriptive factors were chosen for their quantitative study of hybrid TV formats in lists, tables, profiles and questionnaires.

Additional determinants arise through Hißnauer (2011) with his approximation to outline a documentary theory and his deliberations of formats, genres and categories within systematic classifications. Further sources are Hahn (2005), Götzke & Knüppel (2009) and later Lancaster (2018) with their respective approach to elucidate the transformation of documentary formats through technological evolution. Lastly, the common denominators lean on elements of Kuchenbuch (2005) and Faulstich (2013) with their general film & television analysis theory, under consideration of a couple of the basic principles of Mikos (2015) in conjunction with the outcomes of the preceding chapters:

1. Classification into Classic Categories: When following the systematics of the superordinate level distinctions into classic categories in film and television studies like coverage/reportage, documentation, feature, TV report, documentary, and others (e.g. in Hißnauer, 2011; Zimmermann & Hoffmann, 2006), this study presented a set of arguments to allocate “charity filmmaking” in the classic category of the documentary.

2. Classification into Hybrid Categories: Research in this field describes numerous hybrid categories such as docu-soap, docu-drama, fake-docu, scripted reality and many others. (e.g. Zimmermann & Hoffmann, 2006; Lünenborg et al., 2011; Hißnauer, 2011) Evidence presented in this theoretical discussion does not propose, though, that charity filmmaking is part of any of these aforementioned hybrid categories. However, it is somewhat closely related to but distinct from the premises of what scholars subsume under the hybrid collective term “video activism” (e.g. Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015).
3. Roots, Origins & Documentary Family Background: The distinctions and integral conceptual parts of video activism such as “mobilisation”, promoting “social change”, and “bearing witness” (see “witness video”) (e.g. Askanius, 2012a, 2013, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015) were discovered to be at the heart of charity filmmaking as well. Detailed ensuing discussions of the thesis then spawned the perception that the social impact or social change character of “video activism” or “video for social change” in particular (often named under the auspices of “video activism”) (Askanius, 2014) denotes the closest connection to charity filmmaking. Apart from that, evidence from the thesis implies disparities between both format classes on several levels and emphasises the lack of large-scale research in this evolving field. Still, the notion of “emancipatory consciousness” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015) (see citation in section 5. 1.) expounded as emanating jointly with “video activism” was found by the thesis to apply to “altruistic filmmaking” and “equips people with the tools necessary to resist political manipulation, symbolic domination or cultural subjugation.” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, p. 2) (see citation in section 5. 1.)
4. Duration: Although in this research project, mainly feature-length documentaries (and medium-length such as *KONY 2012*, 2012) were found as usable, representative, and insightful cases, charity documentaries may be allotted within all of the typical durations that film festivals and authors describe. This thesis resolves that there are short (< 15 Min.), medium-length (15 – 40 Min.), long (> 40 Min.), and feature-length (ca. > 70 Min.) charity films.
5. Relationship with Truth & Authenticity: The thesis remarked that an adequate reflection of the truth on many layers, co-joining with the aspiration to radiate an authentic overall appeal congruently while fostering credibility are indispensable constituents of charity filmmaking. These justifiably assist in building trust and hence converging towards the altruistic goals. This subsumption is a reflection of

the line-of-argument of the author. Consequently, a blending of the documentary as a representation of the real but based on veritable genuineness (cf. Schadt, 2002) and cinematic actuality as an influencing intervening element (cf. Sponzel, 2007) while upholding (i.e. striving towards/approximating) higher values such as believability, sincerity, truthfulness and reliability was realised in my charity film. Such fusing components were also found in *Before the Flood* (2016) and identified as leading to credibility, candour and authenticity (see appendix A). As scattered across several analysed domains, intentionally authentic shaky camera operation (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]) (in contrast with astounding aerials), easy-to-understand and slang-style on-screen talk, questions and comments – particularly by DiCaprio and other aspects of rhetoric language were found to aid authenticity as well. The analysis of the editing style shone a light on additional factors such as filler words, unfinished sentences, and mediocre communication consciously incorporated as components of the final film. Moreover, buddy chats with President Obama, Elon Musk and other distinguished interviewees appeared to support credibility and believability while serving as “social proof” (e.g. cf. Cialdini, 2007, 2021) in *Before the Flood* (2016). These relevant factors joined spontaneous interactions and credibly amazed reactions as well as seemingly ill-prepared or presumably unrehearsed queries, intermittent stammering, and repeated words or outright wordiness.

This whole mixed rhetoric everywhere in the film led to a uniform perception confirming the impression of authenticity on an intuitive level. This impression was buttressed additionally by a combination of available, natural, outdoor and daylight, and therefore authentic and realistic lighting (e.g. cf. Blank, 2015), among other aesthetic characteristics (see below). Other referenced examples across the study reiterated or elaborated the inferences from *Before the Flood* (2016).

Summing this up, the thesis hypothesises a coherent strategy of individually effective ingredients that aid in forming “allegiance” with a “sympathetic” reaction (see chapter four; cf. Smith, 1994, 2004), build trust, create an authentic representation, and thereby reinforce the prospects of fulfilling charitable goals (see below) through those respective films. This supposition concurs with the key findings on the aesthetics of altruistic filmmaking (see below).

6. Altruistic Films Defined (Altruism Defined)¹⁶: Searching for an overall definition and particularly researching the current body of knowledge on altruism, the thesis defines altruistic or charity films as follows. “Altruistic films” are films created or instigated by individuals (or small groups) who often have higher ideals and values, significant self-imposed moral standards and strong convictions (for details, see chapter one; furthermore, see characteristics of the altruistic filmmaker below).

Their objectives, purposes, or the impacts of their honourable assignment are to create a conscience of controversies, adversity, deplorable conditions, and other difficulties on this earth. Additionally, they aspire to facilitate values, ambitions and sublime goals such as equal treatment, reputability, justness, communality, growth, mutuality, tolerance and independence while working to accomplish the practical goals and concrete results of altruistic filmmaking.

7. Altruistic Aims, Goals & Dimensions: Aims and goals of altruistic filmmaking that are collected, researched and defined throughout this project fit into five clustered primary dimensions:

- a. Intra-Personal: Education, knowledge creation, personal advancements and insights, emotional relations and relatedness.
- b. Inter-Personal: Awareness-raising; (inter-)national influence on companies, enterprises, nations and other organisations as well as individuals or particular groups such as politicians; call to action, imitation, supportive activities.
- c. Monetary: Fundraising, volunteering, fostering patronage, generating benefits in kind.
- d. Social Level: Social change/impact, advocacy, political or social intervention, political changes, and social justice (correlating with formulated aims of “video activism”; e.g. cf. Cizek, 2005; Askanius, 2014; Mateos & Gaona, 2015), charitable cause, NGO or foundation directed aims or satisfaction of their guidelines and core objectives, the greater good (for humanity), influence voting behaviour (with tactics such as from Cialdini, 2007, 2021).
- e. Educational, Enlightening & Journalistic: Information spreading, journalistic work, documentation, critical coverage, enlightenment mission, supervisory role.

¹⁶ Reminder: With this, I would like to highlight/disclose that I utilised/adopted a similar description of “altruistic films” for my own (professional) activities with ALTRUISTFILMS at www.altruistfilms.de (cf. AltruistFilms.de – Ethics Statement, n.d.).

- f. Derivatives of these dimensions regularly comply with the purposes of the philanthropy itself.
8. Ways & Tactics to Achieve the “Altruistic Mission”: This thesis herewith expresses the awareness that there is a multitude of techniques and procedures to succeed with the altruistic mission. The collection of findings of this thesis reveals and plausibly argues that there are several functional concepts. This notion also implies that there are probably many more to discover, which could lead to future research in this area. Here is an abridged overview of the collected tactics and methods researched and touched by this project.
 - a. Emotional response generation (e.g. Smith, 1994, 2004)
 - b. Methods and dimensions of persuasion (like “authority”, “social proof”, “liking”, “consistency”, and more) (Cialdini, 1984, 1993, 2007, 2021)
 - c. Employment of the “baby schema” and suggesting to rely on proven concepts such as “cuteness” (e.g. Lorenz, 1971; Glocker et al., 2009; Van Duuren et al., 2003; Schneider, 2013 [online]; Borgi et al., 2014 [online]) among other psychological effects.
 - d. Newly introduced adaptation of revealing the “unknown unknown” with the “Johari Window” (e.g. Luft & Ingham, 1955, 1961; Handy, 1999; Saxena, 2015; Kim, 2017) within altruistic filmmaking (see chapter seven).
 - e. The thesis touches and recognises the subject and methodology to achieve “contagiousness” by mentioning the element “triggers” (Berger, 2013) that overlap with findings on emotional responses (e.g. Smith, 1994, 2004) and persuasion (e.g. Cialdini, 2007, 2021).
 - f. The thesis explores aesthetics, semiotics & audiovisual aspects, visual and rhetorical repetitions, and more (see segment below).
 - g. The theoretical and practice parts elucidated and established metaphors and stylistic devices as parts of a general approach.
 - h. Methods of dramatisation, focusing, and exacerbation to drive the memorability of scenes and the affection of the audience are highlighted.
 - i. The applicability of particularised strategies of simplification and straightforwardness (e.g. directly reaching a large audience as Leonardo DiCaprio achieves with uncomplicated language in *Before the Flood*, 2016, appendix A) is observable across a variety of examples, such as *Ten Billion* (2015) and *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* (2017).

Further Research: This study suggests a more in-depth look at additional concepts and theories from psychology, sociology, audience research, action research, and adjacent fields where appropriate. Examples such as the need for comprehensible, replicable, evidence-based, large-scale quantitative studies of cognitive dissonances, heuristics and biases concerning film studies and emotion would be exciting avenues for further research.

9. Means to Attain “Authority”, “Social Proof”, “Liking”, “Consistency”, (Cialdini, 2007, 2021): The findings of the thesis suggest that numerous elements such as renowned experts, committed distinguished celebrities and a comprehensive collection of stakeholders and involved parties are among the preferred tools of choice of filmmakers to impart “authority”, “social proof”, “consistency”, and “liking” (Cialdini, 2007, 2021). These renowned characters were present as acting figures, through voice-over and in interviews, worthy of imitation.

Further aides to reach these means were found in relying on established psychological methods and unconscious triggers, such as the “baby schema” (“Kindchenschema”) (e.g. Lorenz, 1971) in presenting vulnerable mothers and their helpless children. Moreover, supportive factors were detected in audiovisual repetitions (throughout rhetorical speech and layers of audiovisuals) as subsequent paragraphs summarise in more depth.

10. Characterisation: The Typical “Altruistic Filmmaker”? This doctoral thesis identifies and circumscribes the “altruistic filmmaker” in three dimensions. First: Who he is. Second: How his connection towards his topic or beneficiary is. Third: Who or what he supports or the origins of his connection. Consequently, the thesis hypothesises that it is a professional filmmaker (often a one-man-film-crew, auteur-documentarian or small team of initiators), charitably engaged (distinguished) journalist, celebrity or a well-connected person with affiliations towards celebrities and luminaries. This filmmaker is then financed by, acts for, or generates projects in accordance with, in association with, motivated by, or in endorsement of social or service clubs, philanthropies, endowments, charities or NGOs and other non-commercial beneficiaries (e.g. charities).
11. Themes, Topics & Content-Range: The doctoral thesis selects themes and topics that are derived from archetypical films, film collections (e.g. initially EarthMovies.org – Home, 2012 [archived]), the author’s brainstorming, charity award information, various websites such as at first NewEarthFilms.com – About

(2022 [online]) and others that are listing films of documentary activism and special interests. These topics are then especially systematised and logically arranged with the author's insights into the topic. Furthermore, the author has deduced and deciphered topics as covered by many documentaries and case studies, considered and watched for this thesis. The reader may recognise that they are non-exclusive and frequently work as (related) (meta-)tags well-known from standard video platforms. This means that several of them may apply at the same time. (Please review the tree-structured figure 2 in chapter five for a simplified overview).

- a. Superior Level: Holistic earth view
- b. Secondary Levels: Environment, human beings, animals/wildlife
- c. Tertiary Levels (Environment): Climate change, ecosystems, desert/jungle/wood/prairie, flora, renewable energy, sustainability
- d. Tertiary Levels (Human Beings): Archaeology, culture, food/nutrition, health/wellbeing, science, travel, politics
- e. Tertiary Levels (Animals/Wildlife): Conservation/protection/safety, hazards
- f. Quaternary Levels: Of course, there are also many more detailed quaternary levels. (see figure 2) Examples are human rights, social equity, indigenous people, fair trade, and others.
- g. Furthermore, there are always contemporary topics (e.g. "black lives matter", "climate change") that come in waves related to predominant issues of the time.

12. Technology as the Facilitating Factor across the Value Chain (to Post-Production with Animations, Titles, Graphs & Charts): The literature review (chapter five) and looking at publications about technological transitions (e.g. Hoffmann, 2006) from traditional film recording and evolving equipment, accessories and gear reveal that not only "video activism" has prospered and spread due to the "Handicam Revolution" (e.g. Gregory et al., 2005; Cizek, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009) (since the 1980s).

Furthermore, as this thesis argues, numerous subsequent technological advancements have substantially contributed to the rise of charity filmmaking since around 2005. Cross-matching and comparing existing mentioned literature with the experiences from the practitioner's/author's professional practice over the consecutive years of video production, looking at making of articles and use cases (also supportable/corroborated with the conducted detailed film examination of *Before the Flood*, 2016, cf. appendix A), this study has formulated several claims

about the development, impacts and application of the following for “altruistic filmmaking” (applied to “altruistic filmmaking” from earlier publications such as Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; Lancaster, 2018):

- a. Initiating and facilitating tech factors,
- b. the extension of versatility, competitiveness and quality levels via rapid technological progress,
- c. possibilities for filmmakers without a track-record or a particular team-size to enter the market, and
- d. a day-to-day practical toolkit and selections for the “charity filmmaker”.

These are, in particular, all elements of the now-possible “almost unnoticed” filmmaking (e.g. cf. Hoffmann, 2006), which include but exceed small, lightweight, compact, portable, foldable, high-grade rigs, gear, camera and audio recording. Ever-increasing high-resolution recording options (HD, 2K, 4K, 6K, 8K and beyond) to adhere to the standards of renowned film festivals, the DCI, leading global streaming companies, and merging distribution channels as well as massively extended battery life for uninterrupted documentary work, avail as advantageous enabling constituents.

These integral parts harmonise conveniently with a newly prevailing (almost) all-day recording time, including non-moving, ever-quicker and instantly (re-) writeable, semi-permanent, portable, versatile storage solutions for all types of harsh and demanding working environments (adapted/extrapolated from Hahn, 2005; Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; Lancaster, 2018 and practical experience). This empowerment allows the cinematographer to immerse himself and merge with the ambience he wants to portray.

Adding to the possibilities for charity filmmakers are miniaturised broadcast and even cinema-standard hand-held cameras (e.g. Lancaster, 2018) with technically changed and thus substantially increased quality. These are accompanied by gear features that assure a substantial team reduction, offer powerful artistic options, and entail much lower material costs (e.g. Götzke & Knüppel, 2009; Lancaster, 2018). The latter range across the value chain, from cheap recording solutions to rapid high-performance editing powerhouses.

Benignly correlated preconditions such as affordability, availability, and accessibility of at the same time high-quality production tools might be among the self-evident reasons which paved the way for altruistic filmmaking in the first place. Following

this rationale, one could convincingly argue that these were not only sufficient conditions but also necessary prerequisites for charity filmmaking to come to life.

Other auxiliary factors unearthed by this thesis regarding the prospering of charity filmmaking are abundant complementary post-production techniques of quality-enhancing character such as unique cuts and transitions, distinctive fades, multi-angle/split screen, 2D/3D effects, animations and more. These are co-joined with animated presentations (analogous to and even better than PowerPoint, Prezi, and Keynote), graphs, charts, bars, and other animation types such as novel lower thirds, skyscrapers, stingers, and seamless transitions.

As part of this non-exhaustive compilation in this thesis, technology brought even more to documentary and charity filmmaking, such as over-night editing, and on-location curation, review plus playback of the footage.

Those potentialities may amalgamate under the implications of “immediate controllability”. (e.g. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009)

Compact, portable and high-resolution drones to conduct cutting-edge aerial photography and the ostensibly unstoppable ascent of mobile phone cameras, gimbals, Steadicam, optical image stabilisation plus other perks and all of the newest apparatus and paraphernalia from broadcast and cinematic trade fairs such as IBC, BC Asia, NABshow and Cine Gear Expo complement the facilitating factors of altruistic filmmaking.

The observed de-centralisation of convenient, publicly available, and extensive film archives (e.g. cf. Anderson-Moore, 2015 [online]) equipped with adequate rights management, as case examples like *Before the Flood* (2016) (cf. appendix A) teach indirectly, also presents effective means for charity filmmaking.

13. Aesthetic, Semiotics & Audiovisual Aspects (incl. Cinematography, the Camera Concept, Lighting, Metaphors and Symbolism): This research project discerned that the aesthetics of stunning, captivating, awe-inspiring, exclusive, unambiguous, never before seen, and revelatory recurring locations are prevalent components among examples of charity filmmaking. These transpired to be particularly useful in instilling and establishing credibility, authenticity and meaningfulness that interact and endeavour together to achieve charitable intentions.

These locations, especially the likes of *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), *Everyday Rebellion* (2013), *Ten Billion* (2015), *Before the Flood* (2016) (cf. appendix A) and several other short examples, appear to follow the dictum of

“seeing is believing”, while the authors own artistic practice for the charity RFPD volitionally strived to reach this adage.

This study has further discovered several pieces of evidence to substantiate that creative visual repetitions are a characteristic semiotic pattern in the sphere of altruistic filmmaking. Besides, the reiterativeness of ingrained travel-related images that charity filmmaking appears to use frequently are, for example, disastrous, catastrophic and devastating imagery of the climate, the ecosystem, human living conditions, natural habitats, and the exploitation of natural resources. These are, in each case, carefully chosen as suitable to the subject area. Other analogous illustrations would originate from or associate with the respective core subject of each film, of course.

The conclusively apparent aim seems to be first to instil belief in the trustworthiness of the audiovisuals, to strengthen the credibility and authority of the film by transporting facts and then to ultimately inspire counter-action of the audience (i.e. to mobilise them to take action or inspire donations, as explained above).

Precedents of the world of images across watched documentaries suggest that the intense and emotionally appealing aesthetic of altruistic films always includes appropriately fitting illustrations, matching their themes, goals and appeals as mentioned above.

Hallmark examples as presented by the cases in this research were floodings, extreme weather phenomena, maternal and child living conditions, and depictions of overpopulation as well as audiovisual expressions of mental concepts such as debauchery, excess, and helplessness.

Also, playing a preeminent role in the systematic approaches, repetitions emerged, which are already known as a standard technique among stylistic devices in rhetoric, oration and linguistics. There are many linguistic examples as kinds of repetitions like *simplex*, *conduplicatio*, *anadiplosis*, *anaphora*, and others. (Harris, 2017) Analogously, the doctoral thesis found various forms of repetitions in filmic examples that profoundly reinforce the charitable effort.

Thus, filming in proximity as part of a unique blocking and proxemics structure was also implemented repetitively as part of the style of the author’s reflective RFPD film production. For instance, sensitively presenting mother and child close-ups and intimate emotionally charged portrayals of vulnerable human beings, respectively.

Ultimately, it is also universal in film and television studies to inspect symbolism and metaphors used as part of the narrative structure, stylistic devices or audiovisual elements of films. Thus, this project's research spotted and then corroborated instances that testify to purposeful applications of symbolic and metaphorical expression as a deliberate part of the morphology of charity filmmaking.

As above-mentioned crucial components suggested previously, these metaphoric levels were implemented in the narrative as a secondary or tertiary virtual story layer. Through selected depictions, they further acted as representations of broader concepts, were used as emotionally aggregating visuals or strengthened the memorability of the portrayed scenes by contrasting or juxtaposition.

As a side result, this research project found that a comprehensive, emotionalising camera concept (e.g. compelling perspectives, effective movement and aesthetic framing style, proficient aerials, artistic slow-motion, stunning underwater captures) was usually realised in a way to underline the qualities of altruistic filmmaking. Together with a related coherent lighting concept (e.g. natural lighting, outdoor, daylight), these were always intentionally chosen in a way that strengthened the altruistic themes and goals of the movies.

14. Production Process: This study has illustrated a one-man-band production process for charity filmmaking, empowered by technology and delimited by funds. Anyone (i.e. self-proclaimed or trained independents) without a track-record can become a filmmaker. (e.g. cf. Hoffmann, 2006; Götzke & Knüppel, 2009) Operating with cheap and easy-to-operate, single-person-use gear may suggest coining the term of a “new individual allround filmmaker”. This type of filmmaker often plays a significant role in charity filmmaking. At other times, smaller teams or, more rarely, slightly larger crews engage in altruistic filmmaking as well. The thesis concludes that assembly line-like effectiveness and predefined, no-frills filming as if to the beat are not procedural features of the critical framework for altruistic filmmaking.

Instead, these are elements of “flow” (e.g. cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 2009), variance, unpredictability, freedom of action, unlimitedness and artistic licence. All influencing factors and conditions should be subservient to the goals of generating positive reactions, fostering “allegiances” with “sympathetic” responses (see chapter four; cf. Smith, 1994, 2004), disseminating knowledge, increasing awareness, mobilisation of the audience, inspiring to volunteer, triggering

contributions and thus finally achieving the broader aims of charity or altruistic filmmaking. (see section 7. 10.)

15. Dangers and Relationship with Embedded Journalism: Inspecting the relationship with embedded journalism, war and crisis zone news gathering and disaster aid (e.g. Rados, 2003; Schwarte, 2007; Munz, 2007; Junger, 2010; Reichelt, 2010), this study deduced similarities with the military encounters, dangers (also known from video activism; e.g. Mateos & Gaona, 2015), limitations of the travel crew, reinforced security measures, and further regional, cultural or national threats, stipulations and obstacles as resembling those of charity filmmaking. (For details, see chapter seven).

16. List of Charity Films Fitting the Framework: As a result of the thesis, the following list was compiled by the author for fitting adequately to the topics, intentions, aims, and other determinants of altruistic filmmaking, as presented cumulatively above. This chronological arrangement (within the timeframe 2005 - 2021) neither claims comprehensiveness nor intends to evaluate the quality of any catalogued or non-catalogued film. It is merely intended to exemplify and support better comprehension of the findings and to aid readers' understanding of representatives of the field.

(Note: The list is not final)

- *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006)
- *Food, Inc.* (2008)
- *KONY 2012* (2012)
- *Planet RE:think* (2012)
- *Trashed* (2012)
- *Blackfish* (2013)
- *Everyday Rebellion* (2013)
- *Fed Up* (2014)
- *Food Chains* (2014)
- *Catching the Sun* (2015)
- *Ten Billion* (2015)
- *The Altruism Revolution* (2015)
- *Land Grabbing* (2015)
- *Before the Flood* (2016)
- *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* (2017)
- *The Price of Fairness* (2017)

Demarcation Line Problem and Contextual Constraints: Closing the compilation of the thesis' findings and transitioning to the last segment on the limitations of the research, there are some noteworthy annotations. Firstly, it should be regarded that adhering to all of the above findings to a sublime degree would be ideal in an immaculate world.

However, films that do not entirely transact all goals and fulfil every determining factor at the same time may nevertheless fall within the classification of "charity filmmaking". Arguments could be legitimate as to why a film might not wholly remain inside the guidelines of the framework at every stage of the process, upon distribution or anywhere along the value-creation chain. Still, admitting such films to join the charity category primarily based on logical and coherent chains of reasoning may be worthwhile.

Of course, it is recommendable to be sceptical and considerate about such evaluations as a critical thinker. In case of uncertainty or if films are crossing the demarcation lines, depending on one's ontological position, it is probably more worthwhile to consider a film in question for a more in-depth evaluation and grant the benefit of the doubt. Such research into more films within or at the edges of the framework proposed by this thesis could lead to more consummations and discoveries. It is also hopefully evident that the altruistic filmmaking framework above may not only be valuable for more theoretical scientific research but also as a practise-based toolkit, derived from case studies, analysed examples and professional practice at the same time.

The findings hopefully, ultimately serve as a contribution to the body of knowledge concerning this new phenomenon. Such research could help, for example, to estimate the degree of practised altruism or the level of adherence to the proposed factors. It could further create subjective or objectively substantiated credence factors as mathematical expressions, Boolean terms, or natural numbers and thereby commence the development of a standardised evaluation model for charity films.

Chapter Nine – Limitations, Open Questions & Future Research

9.1. Overview

Altruistic or charity filmmaking have not – to the best knowledge of the author – been described with a complexly formulated multilayered framework like in this thesis before. This study is thus virtually only an introductory or preliminary study that seeks to open up a new subfield within the realm of (hybrid) documentary filmmaking, associated with

video activism and considering notions from embedded journalism besides other related fields.

Furthermore, this is a not arbitrarily generalisable combined creative practice and theory study that sought to compare findings from theory, literature review, selected case studies, and one film analysis with the authors' own long-term documentary film project. All this and the mutual influence of the process steps brought forth a proposition of a taxonomy of "altruistic filmmaking". The thesis consequently offers various opportunities for future research and subsequent studies.

Some options of inquiry were mentioned already in previous chapters. First and foremost, the doctoral thesis finally suggests a formalised codified quantitative follow-up research that should review an adequate amount of representative films. A process like this could help to further probe, validate or falsify, check the operability and reach of the preliminary findings of this thesis. Additional profound analytical case studies of carefully selected examples could also serve to magnify specific findings or subtract them as coincidental artefacts or exaggerations.

Following Greg M. Smith's (2003) remarks, this thesis also wants to reiterate that there still appears to be a major gap in research on film and emotion, Murray S. Smith's (1994, 2004) "emotional responses", and audience reaction or influence.

Along these lines, the study also wants to suggest further research of psychological influences, cognitive dissonances, heuristics and biases (e.g. cf. Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) and their relationship with and impact on film reception, emotional responses and possibly triggered audience reactions or mobilising effects. Due to the powerful and effective, because innate, psychological predispositions and coupled repercussions, this research could potentially greatly benefit charity filmmaking and other areas of filmmaking.

9.2. Closing Remarks

Intellectual humility (cf. Robson, 2019) or humility in general, is what I learned the most from this entire arduous process of writing a doctoral thesis (and from my studies of the "Skeptics" movement; e.g. Novella, 2018). Finishing this thesis, I can thus see many limiting conditions of the study (of which I listed various above). There are surely more that can produce additional opportunities for future research.

Appendix A. 1. Film Selection Process

The film selection process is founded on traditional principles for empirical social research as reproduced and described by Kromrey, Roose & J. Strübing (2016) that were in a similar form suggested for film sample selections by Mikos (2015). Since a full census is neither viable nor reasonable, nor realisable within the confinements of a doctoral thesis (see time limits and research viability as a reason to delimit sample selection in Mikos, 2015), Kromrey et al. (2016) offer partial sampling as an option. A partial sampling alone is not the whole solution to delimiting a research subject to those cases or samples that promise to produce the most valid generalisations through intensive analyses. (Scheuch, 1974; Kromrey et al., 2016)

Thus Kromrey et al. (2016, p. 254) suggest two options to side-step the arguably too costly and time-consuming full census: 1. “Representational conclusion” [translated by the author], and 2. “Conclusion via inclusion” [translated by the author].

For this thesis, “Representational conclusion” [translated by the author] will be chosen since, according to Kromrey et al. (2016), it offers the possibility to formulate or develop statements with a descriptive character being category-typical of the entire relevant population. On the other hand, this technique empowers the researcher to use general hypotheses solely based on the specific set of empirical sample data (Kromrey et al., 2016).

According to Friedrichs (1982), as cited in Kromrey et al. (2016, p. 263) and also comparable to a description for films by Mikos (2015), there are four typical criteria in social sciences that partial sampling has to fulfil in order to be generalisable:

“1. the sample must be a reduced representation of the population in terms of the heterogeneity of the elements and in terms of the representativeness of the variables relevant for hypothesis testing.

2. the units or elements of the sample must be defined.

3. the population should be specifiable and empirically definable.

4. the selection procedure must be specifiable and fulfil requirement (1).”

[translated by the author] (Friedrichs, 1982, p. 125)

The segment below propounds the criteria that informed the picking procedure to comply with these four criteria for generalisability. The rationales for the film selection are presented in more detail in this thesis, as the scope of the research project only

offered the possibility for one very in-depth film analysis or a few relatively superficial analyses. However, the extensive analysis (with various short excursions into case studies and, of course, the reflective analysis of the RFPD documentary) was preferred upon the prospect of a more valuable gain in knowledge. As with all studies, it is clear that this exploratory approach also entails limitations. Conversely, it offers numerous avenues for further research (e.g. researching a broader film selection based on this thesis' framework, conducting complex quantitative research, deepening findings through follow-up comparative studies).

Time frame: "Altruistic filmmaking" is a relatively new phenomenon that has found some of its roots and precursors in "video activism" since the 1980s (see chapter five above). However, it has ascended or emerged individually, more concretely, since the second half of the 2000s. The period for productions that fall into this category will be limited to the years since the broader availability of professional filmmaking kits at cost-effective price points.

Following prerequisites of objectivity and comparability, this study will consult the standard guidelines, specifications and architecture of the Digital Cinema Initiatives (DCI) for digital cinema systems in their original version. (cf. Digital Cinema Initiatives – Specifications V 1.0, 2005 [online])

The consortium was founded in 2002 by several of the well-respected major studios of the US studio system (e.g. Paramount, Universal Studios, The Walt Disney Company, Warner Bros., Sony Pictures Entertainment) and published their jointly developed V1.0 in 2005. (Digital Cinema Initiatives – Specifications V 1.0, 2005 [online]; Digital Cinema Initiatives – About DCI, 2022 [online]) Besides other expectations, the minimum requirement to produce DCI-compliant cinematic content is 2K (with frame rates of 24 or 48 fps) as the lowest cinematically accepted image quality, with aspect ratios of 2.39:1 (CinemaScope) with 2048×858px, or 1.85:1 (Flat) with 1998×1080px. The bit depth at least requires 12bit per colour component, the colour space adheres to the confinements of CIE XYZ, and the content needs to be stored in single pictures each in a (DCDM Image File) MXF-container with JPEG 2000 compression at no higher bitrate than 250 Mbit/s. (Digital Cinema Initiatives – Specifications V 1.0, 2005 [online])

In comparison, Netflix has rigorously raised the expected industry standards with their growing market influence since their decision in 2014 to only accept 4K (3.840 x 2.160px with frame rates from 23.976 fps; colour encoding RGB 4:4:4) for their Netflix Originals. (Netflix Originals – Delivery Specifications Version OC-3-3, 2019 [archived]; Netflix Originals – Delivery Specifications Version OC-4-1, 2021 [online])

In order to ensure further credibility and adherence with international quality measures, films were only available for selection with an existent IMDB.com page (i.e. having complied with all of their stringent regulations).

In addition to the time frame, aims and objectives of the selected film needed to be part of the above-defined for “altruistic filmmaking” (see chapter 5. Literature - Video Activism (since the late 1980s) in Hybrid Documentary Filmmaking). Themes and topic range were likewise required to align with those described above (see chapter 5. Literature - Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking”).

Furthermore, the films needed to support charitable causes, foundations or activities or create respective effects (as detailed particularly in chapters one and four above). Moreover, the selected films also needed to be funded by, created by, with support of or for any of the groups of people mentioned above – e.g. service clubs, foundations, NGO’s, philanthropists.

In order to be further comparable and meet professional quality standards, only cinematic films that had been nominated for or won either charity awards or (national) film festivals or have received imposing, and massive worldwide reactions would come through the filter.

Many renowned festivals will have a definition of feature film length of at least 70 or 75 Min. By way of example, The Hollywood Foreign Press Association considers only motion pictures from 70 Min. for the Golden Globe Award (documentaries cannot qualify there, though). (Golden Globe Award Consideration Rules – FAQ, 2018 [online])

Thus, this thesis will stick with them and the EE British Academy Film Awards that require a length of at least 70 Min. to be eligible. (BAFTA – EE British Academy Film Awards – Rules and Guidelines 2021/22 – Feature Film Categories, 2021 [online]) At the same time, these denominators also ensure that those films will not be misunderstood as, entangled with, or otherwise confused with scholarly described “video activism” (e.g. as described by authors such as Askanius, 2013, 2014) at all.

Since the immediate goal of the thesis is to look at the ultimate impact of film productions, their either critical intervention with the social environment or aspects of mobilisation, fostering volunteering or eventually generating donations for charitable causes were considered as criteria as well. (see earlier referenced case studies like *KONY 2012*, 2012)

Because it is eminently only viable to speculate upon the agenda or intention of any filmmaker and their moral or ethical stances as well as their “altruistic” motivations or background, it is only plausible to pick films guided by indirect measures of their “altruistic effects”. The arguments delivered throughout the preceding chapters

permitted the allocation of such dimensions. These assuredly encompass, for example, international journalistic appreciation and welcoming scientific responses and ratings that offer quantifiable insights regarding the perspective on the quality of the films, among many other items. Additionally, qualitative analyses of emotional responses and approximations of donations collected or triggered through the production of those films and similar fact-finding can also favour drawing other conclusions of avail on the outreach, impacts and relevancy of those films.

Although not explicitly stated, the above-delineated measures to ensure a certain level of quality, prosocial/ethical standards and professionalism also provide that radical or extremist films would in all probability fall through the grid.

Finally, the collection of denominators above is guided by the quest to diverge unsuccessful from successful films and aid in selecting only those that would fit with such measures of success. This catalogue of criteria has been instated because only films that have eventually succeeded in attaining the ambitions of “altruistic filmmaking” are the one’s that practitioners would like to canvass and learn from as a paragon example, and scientists would appoint for closer inspection.

As a result, the following impactful documentary feature film that would conform to the above-defined criteria and requirement specification has been selected for comprehensive, eclectic and explanatory film analysis, adjoining prior discoveries and antecedent case study findings.

Appendix A. 2. *Before the Flood* (2016)

Appendix A. 2.1. *Before the Flood* – Selection, Background, Donations & Technology

This segment highlights continuative reasons for choosing *Before the Flood* (2016) as the principal case study and film analysis and how this selection reflects the abovementioned prerequisites.

Before the Flood (2016) (IMDB score: 8.2, 25th February 2022) indubitably epitomises the most potent Hollywood-backed film of choice from this realm, and for sound reasons. In consilience with the rationales above, the film straightaway attracts prodigious audiences because of its much-vaunted cast and crew. Alongside Academy Award Winners actor/producer Leonardo DiCaprio and director/producer Fisher Stevens are other luminaries and masters of the art: producers such as billionaire media tycoon and philanthropist James D. Packer and Brett Ratner (RatPac

Entertainment; here: RatPac Documentary Films) and executive producer Martin C. Scorsese, among others. (cf. IMDB – Before the Flood, 2016 [online])

Despite this star-studded crew, only the film's pivotal protagonist and narrator, Leonardo DiCaprio, had multitudes of followers scattered across the numerous mainstream social media outlets (i.e. partly millions per channel) when the documentary harbingered its global-scale release (e.g. cf. Leonardo DiCaprio Instagram – Announcement Video, 24th October 2016 [online]). Thus, the documentary already had access to a vast audience and vibrant fanbase who could be expeditiously drawn to him as the headliner.

DiCaprio, reputed for his donations, environmental activism, foundation, comparable earlier activities and, for instance, thematically-related documentary feature *The 11th Hour* (2007) (e.g. Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation – Timeline, 2019 [online]; Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation – Home, 2019 [online]), is the emotionalising vehicle or critical factor that propels the structure of sympathy (see chapter four) that the documentary requires to impart its message. Since its advent (1998), the (non-profit) Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF) asserts to have subsidised in excess of 200 projects with at least \$100 Mio. and thereby endowing 132 organisations across five oceans and 50 countries and have furthermore meanwhile somehow merged with the newly established Earth Alliance (Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation – Home, 2019 [online]).

The foundation's mission statement interlinks tightly in a distinctive way with philanthropic or altruistic motivations and ethical stances (explicated widely across many sections of this thesis), expectations of a venerable charity, and scanned film examples from this domain. It reads: "The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation is dedicated to the long-term health and wellbeing of all Earth's inhabitants. Through collaborative partnerships, we support innovative projects that protect vulnerable wildlife from extinction, while restoring balance to threatened ecosystems and communities. LDF's grantmaking program encompasses six focus areas: [the following text is visualised as buttons on their website] Wildlife & Landscape[,] Marine Life & Oceans[,] Climate Change[,] Media, Science & Technology[,] Environment Now California Program[, and] Indigenous Rights" (Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation – Home, 2019, p. 1 [online]).

Given that the benefactor has assuredly imbibed and disseminated the set of ethical values in the case of a private foundation, it is legitimate to point out that the foundation's unifying value code and spirit will doubtlessly edify an interlinked documentary film. To duly back up DiCaprio's years of dedication to the betterment of the planet with evidential proof, it is noteworthy to mention that a proportionate episode is intercut into the first third of the environmental documentary. In this emblematic

section of old 4:3 television footage (cf. *Before the Flood*, 2016 film¹⁷ ca. TC 00:16:21 - 00:17:17), some of his erstwhile activist commitments, such as rallying for “Earth Day 2000”, are reconceived self-critically and unpretentiously via voice-over for this express purpose.

The documentary cast features world-renowned stars from all walks of life, such as Pope Francis, at the time UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, then US-President Barack Obama, serial-entrepreneur Elon Musk (e.g. PayPal, Tesla, SpaceX), climate scientist and NASA astronaut Piers Sellers (since deceased), multi-award-winning director Alejandro G. Iñárritu among many more. (cf. “commitment”, “authority”, “liking”, “social proof”; see chapter four above; Cialdini, 2007, 2021)

Picked up and later distributed through National Geographic, the documentary *Before the Flood* (2016) celebrated its world premiere in September 2016 in the attendance of its key VIPs in the programme of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) (Yuen, 9th September 2016 [online]) and received nominations and won prizes such as the Hollywood Film Awards – Hollywood Documentary Award (6th November 2016) (HFA – Honorees, 2016 [archived]) and Evening Standard British Film Awards – Best Documentary (8th December 2016). The latter was reported in the article “Evening Standard British Film Awards: Close up on the winners” by Evening Standard (Sexton et al., 9th December 2016 [online]).

As pronounced by DiCaprio via his social media, the film was released commercial-free and free of charge by National Geographic across numerous channels such as Hulu, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Twitter, Nat Geo, Facebook, Google Play, and Apple iTunes. (Chow, 25th October 2016 [online]) This climate change-related documentary was rolled out by National Geographic on 30th October 2016, as DiCaprio declared in his preannouncement, “to make sure as many people as possible see this film”. (Leonardo DiCaprio Instagram – Announcement Video, 24th October 2016 [online])

The 96 Min. long US doc feature film (IMDB – *Before the Flood*, 2016 [online]) recounting the cross-continental voyages and report about climate change of UN Messenger of Peace DiCaprio was henceforth publicised in 45 languages and broadcast in 171 countries around the world. (Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation – New Documentary, 2016 [online])

¹⁷ All time codes (TC) that appear in this chapter (unless otherwise indicated) will refer to the film *Before the Flood* (2016).

Shot by DP Antonio Rossi with documentarian Stevens (known for covering environmental topics) spanning two years, “Rossi used a mix of Canon EOS Digital Cinema cameras, starting the production on a C500 (shooting 4K Raw to an Odyssey 7Q+ external recorder) and [a] 1D C (often rigged to a MoVI stabilizer).” (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]) During the production phase of *Before the Flood* (2016), Canon launched the EOS C300 Mark II, which DP Rossi – already accustomed to utilising varying Canon cameras – quickly embraced with its body-internal capturing in 4K (DCI compliant and with 15 stops of latitude; Canon U.S.A. – EOS C300 Mark II, 2022 [online]) as the new main camera for this shoot (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]), and which could have made the 7Q+ largely obsolete.

Overall, of course, as the film’s credits certify (e.g. cf. *Before the Flood*, 2016 film TC 01:32:40), there were several camera operators and even specialists, for example, for underwater photography.

Furthermore, the DP placed heavy confidence in two cinematic Canon zoom lenses, the CN-E 17-120mm and CN-E 30-105mm (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]), presumably instead of obtaining whole sets of prime lenses, which would have resulted in switching them all the time. What does this technical information tell a scientific reader in this context?

Firstly, these are undoubtedly great quality cameras. However, they are everyday working gear all across the globe and somewhat inexpensive in comparison to typical Hollywood cinematic camera setups. Secondly, Netflix still approves the Canon C300 Mark II and C500 for any content even today, and approved cameras should make up 90% of each programme. At the same time, less strict regulations may apply to non-fiction programmes and stipulated exemptions (Netflix – Approved Cameras, 2021 [online]). Thus, these cameras are already good enough to satisfy all the requirements of Netflix and assuredly others simultaneously. Seemingly *Before the Flood* (2016) fulfilled all prerequisites and was consequently streamable on Netflix from 1st February 2018 for two years straight until 1st February 2020. (New On Netflix USA, n.d. [online])

Probably the cheapest of all the above setups would be the 1D C (£9.300¹⁸ or \$15.000 RSVP) (Canon U.S.A. Introduces EOS-1D C, 12th April 2012 [online]) combined with the MōVI Pro (roughly £4.100¹⁹ - 6.000 or \$5.500 - 8.000, depending on

¹⁸ Note: This GBP rate was converted and rounded from the USD value of the original US product announcement at the exchange rate at that time.

¹⁹ Note: As the source is a US shop, the GBP exchange rate has been calculated and rounded based on the USD price.

the actual configuration) (FreeFly Store – MōVI Pro, 2022 [online]) and a more compact and lightweight lens that would fit on this gimbal. So, this setup could have been less than £16.350²⁰ or \$25.000, which is, for example, around the same price as a single ARRI Master Prime lens, of which Hollywood productions not uncommonly have 6-10 per camera. This conjecture further indicates that even weighing that this is one of the most impressive examples of Hollywood-style charity production, the gear in use was still remarkably budget-friendly and compact. As reported in Dager (16th November 2016 [online]), Fisher Stevens sought a dynamic non-static look, and hence nearly the entire documentary footage was filmed handheld style with the cameras above and available light only.

The subsequent in-depth film analysis sections below untangle the effects of this approach, which also include a more energetic and less traditional style (Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]), and other details expounded, for instance, in the segments about the lighting concept and editing/cutting.

The topic range covered by the film ranges from “Global Warming” as “the most important issue of our time!” (Re-told in the film by DiCaprio from a meeting with Gore, *Before the Flood*, 2016 film TC 00:12:25) expanding in the realm of climate change, natural environments and habitats such as marine biodiversity, via the geopolitical landscape and the ecosystem to measures of preservation, mitigation of fossil fuel consumption, emission reduction, different types of carbon-tax, wildlife conservation and energy industry transformation. (Before the Flood Discussion Guide, n.d.; also deducible directly from *Before the Flood*, 2016)

In consolidation of elucidations, here is a non-comprehensively enumerated overview or assemblage of the initial reasons and maybe even self-evident aspects of why this thesis identifies *Before the Flood* (2016) as a charity film.

- The portrayed topic range above fits neatly with charity films, as described in this thesis. (cf. 5. Literature - Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking”)
- The production launched for free and commercial-free well-nigh worldwide (unrestricted for virtually anyone in numerous languages and countries). (see above)

²⁰ Note: Here, the GBP exchange rate was derived and rounded from the estimated USD value at the average exchange rate for 2015 (in the middle of production).

- The film paid off its carbon footprint via a substantial unsolicited carbon tax as a benefaction contribution. (see below in this section; cf. end credits of *Before the Flood*, 2016)
- According to reporting, at least 250 universities and colleges and additionally faith-based organisations showcased the film (Chow, 25th October 2016 [online]) with an (optional) complementary Discussion Guide and educational resources. (Before the Flood Discussion Guide, n.d.) DiCaprio and Stevens even pledged to “tour to at least 50 college campuses” (Business Wire – University Screenings, 27th September 2016, p. 1 [online]) themselves.
- The film and corresponding campaign frequently ask for concrete charitable donations, encourage volunteering, support activism, ask for direct action multiple times, adopt characteristic moral and ethical values, elevate awareness-raising (cf. recurring reflections around raising awareness, altruistic behaviour, volunteering and contributions in several earlier chapters) in the film and their related online campaign, and offer advice and bonus information. (cf. Before the Flood Discussion Guide, n.d.; cf. end credits of *Before the Flood*, 2016)
- The documentary proffers a whole list of propositions or appeals towards its viewership, including to “VOTE FOR LEADERS WHO WILL FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE (...)” (cf. *Before the Flood*, 2016 film TC 01:29:49).
- The film depicts DiCaprio’s journey as the UN Messenger of Peace (focus area: climate change), which is already a noble charitable effort by itself (without filming it).
- As touched upon previously, several of the film’s key figures are reputable environmental activists, have a history in related charitable efforts, run/ran foundations or support them, or have created similar films already.
- The history of DiCaprio’s foundation (even if nowadays united with Earth Alliance, see above) displays a remarkable record in subsidising adjacent matchable topics with commendable donations as part of his more extensive individual efforts.
- The thesis will explicate several of the itemised details and more reasons below.

Consequently, the film is just the most significant element of a whole online campaign. Moreover, included are educational information and discussion material for privately organised (community) screenings and the option to become an ambassador. (Before the Flood Discussion Guide, n.d.)

The film sets an example with a substantial “carbon-tax” donation (cf. end credits of *Before the Flood*, 2016) to cover typical environmental effects (*Before the Flood*, 2016 film TC 00:12:24 - 00:13:05) of its creation. The primary intended social impacts along these lines involve requests towards the audience to “Take Action” via a proposed option on the website (*Before the Flood – Home*, 2019 [online]) and urgently formulated call-to-actions at the end of the film. Plenty of distinct charity projects or political initiatives with actuating catchlines, such as “Pledge Solidarity with Brazil’s Resistance!” (*Before the Flood – Take Action – Fight the Flood*, 2019, p. 1 [online]) (supporting Amazon Watch, a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity), are among the provided external links. Alternatively, “Join the climate majority and demand that U.S. leaders take steps to fight the climate crisis” (*Before the Flood – Take Action – Fight the Flood*, 2019, p. 1 [online]) (supporting ex-US Vice President and Nobel Prize winner Al Gore’s “The Climate Reality Project”) (for more see *ClimateRealityProject.org – Who We Are*, n.d. [online]) is featured as well.

Notably, the direct request of the film leads viewers to “carbotax.org”. There they can calculate their carbon footprint. For years it was possible as a voluntary symbolic tax to compensate the footprint and start donating this money towards the “Forest & Sea Fund (FSF) directly supporting innovative forest and ocean conservation projects around the world.” (*CarboTax – Help – Questions*, n.d. [archived version]²¹) With donations to offset around 50.000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, they now display a thank-you statement which partially reads: “After years of successfully funding forest and marine efforts, a phase-out of our payment processing system means that the donation feature of the CarboTax web application has closed down. The calculator will remain live as an educational tool.” (*Forest and Sea Fund – Learn More*, n.d., p. 1 [online])

The Sustainable Markets Foundation (New York, NY), with the FSF as one of its projects, holds a description or classification for “Natural Resources Conservation and Protection” in line with their mission “to promote environmental protection, energy efficiency, consumer protection, health and safety, and good government. [case sensitivity changed from its all-caps original]” (*Charity Navigator – Sustainable Markets Foundation*, 2021, p. 1 [online]). These align with both the film’s topics and the topics of charitable films in general. (cf. chapter 5. Literature - Contents & Topic Range of “Altruistic Filmmaking”)

²¹ Note: Although the website is still available, the source refers to a former archived version reflecting the described status.

Apart from all of the explications above, the author of this thesis is unaware of any other particularly insightful and publicly freely procurable metrics that quantified (i.e. closely monitored or documented) the supplemental charitable successes (i.e. exact donations made to all related projects, encouraged volunteering activity, and more) of the film.

In addition to the massive reach and the afore-described complexity, it should be apparent immediately that the film and coupled efforts do not subsume under “video activism” (as used by Askanius, 2019 and others). This project and collective endeavours are much more refined and elaborate and thus fall into the classification this thesis recognises as “altruistic filmmaking” or “charity filmmaking”.

Following the line of argument that signposted the relevancy of *Before the Flood* (2016) as a representative case for altruistic filmmaking, the following three parts present subsequent results of the multi-step film analysis approach (cf. chapter 6. Film Analyses & Deconstruction). Those are findings on the properties and structure of altruistic filmmaking as largely derived by and accumulated with a film protocol and transcript.

Appendix A. 2.2. *Before the Flood* – Story Outline

The entire film is encapsulated between the autobiographical account of DiCaprio’s relationship and childhood recollections as an artificial narrative construct around a triptych (i.e. three-part, foldable) renaissance oil painting (est. late 15th/early 16th-century) on oak from the Netherlands. The artwork’s name is “The Garden of Earthly Delights” by Hieronymus Bosch and hung above DiCaprio’s cot (cf. DiCaprio [VO] in *Before the Flood*, 2016, e.g. ca. TC 00:00:12 - 00:00:49, 00:01:33 - 00:02:26 and 01:25:14 - 01:25:37).

Within the confinements of this storyline, the real-life story encompasses the timeframe from DiCaprio becoming the UN Messenger of Peace (focus area: climate change) (oration at the United Nations on 23rd September 2014) (ca. TC 00:04:02), and his journeys within the following approximately two calendar years (adjusted to fit the narrative) via the Paris Climate Summit 2015 (30th November – 12th December 2015) (ca. TC 01:09:18 - 01:11:28) as the highlight and climax of the film. Close to the end, after discussing its implications with the then US President Barack Obama (ca. TC 01:11:48 - 01:15:28), DiCaprio has an audience with Pope Francis (28th January 2016) (TC 01:24:04 - 01:24:47), which portrays foreshadowing elements of the future. The film then concludes with DiCaprio’s allocution at the Paris Climate Agreement Signing Ceremony of the UN in New York (22nd April 2016) overlaid and composed with an

accelerating recapitulation montage sequence of his voyages (ca. TC 01:27:17 - 01:29:26).

After the prologue, DiCaprio condenses the impetus of his forthcoming expedition and fact-finding mission into the following declarative statement that sets off his adventures:

“The truth is, the more I’ve learned about this issue [referring to ‘Climate Change’ or ‘Global Warming’ respectively, author’s note] and everything that contributes to the problem, the more I realise how much I don’t know, how much I don’t know about this issue.” (DiCaprio [VO] in *Before the Flood*, 2016, ca. TC 00:11:51)

He thereby overtly articulates his intentions and objectives as follows: “I just wanna know how far we’ve gone, how much damage we’ve done and if there’s anything we can do to stop it.” (DiCaprio [VO] in *Before the Flood*, 2016, ca. TC 00:13:22)

Appendix A. 2.3. *Before the Flood* – Multi-Level Film Analysis (Deconstruction)

1) Locations

The documentary is based on several unspoken or indirectly represented premises and underlying assumptions. Most significantly, the movie assimilates the “seeing is believing” idiom as a paradigm that tacitly influences several components of the film and its edifice. One of its most prominent occurrences and impacts is the choice, compilation, relevance, and frequency of the locations depicted.

On his journey, DiCaprio travels through multiple nations such as Canada, Indonesia, Greenland (i.e. Denmark), and Palau’s tiny islands (in Oceania). He extensively depicts those omnifarious and permeating impacts of anthropogenic climate change that are perceivable, unsparing, numberless, exigent, stupendous, and presented as non-negligible and undeniable around the world.

A prominent example is his trip to Canada’s exploited, wrecked and tainted countryside in Alberta. Major fossil fuel companies such as the depicted Suncor Oil Sands (cf. ca. TC 00:10:00 - 00:11:43) are labelled to use tarsands as “the most devastating form of producing fossil fuels” (Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club [VO] TC 00:09:42). Helicopter shots display colossal clear-cut boreal forests, monumental imagery of gargantuan involved machinery, and their works’ obliterating ravages. These manifest in conjunction with unambiguous statements –

on location and voice-over – to stress the vastness and impact of the operation. They also act as a call of urgency and supreme importance to take action.

Huge numbers like “Today we produce about 350,000 barrels a day of synthetic crude oil from this facility.” (Marc Mageau, Suncor, SVP Oil Sands Operations [VO] TC 00:10:42) and DiCaprio’s response to the staggering impressions with “It kind of looks like ‘Mordor’ (...) [f]rom Lord of the Rings.” (DiCaprio TC 00:11:24) culminate in superlative (but non-hyperbolic), seemingly unscripted remarks like “It’s such a massive operation, [pause] it’s mind-blowing.” (DiCaprio TC 00:11:33) as part of recurring rhetorical elements.

Especially such repetitive elements in rhetoric, disastrous imagery, and awe-inspiring locations that allude to a vast scope of possible implications are supposed to shape and foreground an antithesis to the ticklish issue of climate change denialism that weaves a thread through the film. The film repeatedly catenates on-the-nose (sometimes overliteral; without implying the negative connotation to this expression) or to-the-point editing of voice-over or interview with the first visual idea and location that springs to one’s mind. Collectively, these are techniques that form a strategy of unequivocal and lucid audio-visual expression throughout the film.

This systematic approach and repetitive style are dominant for all of the locations. It is applicable for places like ruined tarsands, devastated and flooded weather-crushed island nations like Kiribati and Palau, melting and crumbling icebergs in Greenland, coal plants in China or palm oil plantations that deteriorate vulnerable woodlands and drive species’ extinction in Indonesia. All of the before-mentioned pictures – when perceiving them as part of reception-aesthetic or semiotic – are comprehensible within a split second, virtually like an ideogram. They are intended to work as recurring reminders, burn themselves into the audience’s mind, and possibly create immediate emotional responses.

The underlying concept of, for example, repetitive locations, imagery, and rhetoric would fit adequately into the description of “deepening redundancy” [translated by the author] as an “authentication by emphasising repetition” [translated by the author] according to Hißnauer’s (2011, p. 134) “semio-pragmatics of >authentic< representations” [translated by the author].

What are the critical takeaways of this nexus for altruistic filmmaking in its entirety?

It would be valuable for charity films to draw upon powerful impact-driven contrasting imagery that follows the idiom of “seeing is believing”. Emotive visual language with immediate comprehensibility and concomitant multi-layered meanings for the intelligentsia could correspondingly be advantageous to evoke feelings and build confidence. Footage that has a quality of etching on the viewership’s memory and creating a lingering impression appears adequate and practical. Such footage perhaps even levers out or overrides logic and critical thinking, thereby profoundly touching audiences’ emotions. Astonishing facts and tremendous numerical values elaborated by distinguished specialists on momentous subjects enhance the dent of the work’s veracity.

Effective expressive content and the factors above help leverage creative options, persuade spectators within the narrative, and communicate the altruistic end. *Before the Flood* (2016) impressively manifests how to instrumentalise stunning travel footage, seldom seen or uncommon sites from unfamiliar or exotic circumstances, cultures, regions or countries in conjunction with intuitively accessible visual and rhetorical repetitions or on-the-nose editing. In aggregate, these techniques could breed a sentiment of acute urgency and catalyse concrete action or mobilise audiences.

The overarching concept to leverage abundant, visceral, arresting, larger-than-life sites and appertaining visuals that reflect the nucleus of the motif and the gist of the filmic narrative possesses the potential to be distilled and genericised from this paragon textbook example.

This analysis closely interconnects with and partially pre-empts the subsequent research results on visual repetitions.

In brief, as an actionable strategy: Impress, quantify, vivify, emotionalise, and repetitiously corroborate with expertise, matter-of-fact demonstration and incorruptible persistent visual evidence with trailing calls to action.

2) Visual Repetitions

Just like DiCaprio’s description of the second panel of the Hieronymus Bosch painting depicting the capital vices, excess, overpopulation, debauchery (cf. TC 00:01:56) and a plethora of iconologically interpretable elements, the film frequently applies repetitions of such and affiliated symbolic imagery or deductions and figurative translations thereof.

Examples of the recurring visuals of overpopulation are massive crowds or paramount traffic on the streets in New Delhi (ca. TC 00:33:26), New York City (ca. TC 01:26:28), Beijing (ca. TC 00:29:12) and more.

Analogical, the documentary presents debauchery and excess by fast-edited montage sequences (see segment 6. Editing/Cutting (Unique Principles of Montage)) like for instance, a shot arrangement of old 4:3 TV aspect ratio shots with (partly sepia-style) dream-look showing the “American Dream” and family life of later decades of the 20th century (ca. TC 00:40:01) and formulated forthright as an allegation by Sunita Narain (Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi) towards DiCaprio: “I’m sorry to say this, I know you’re an American and please don’t take this amiss, but your consumption is gonna really put a hole in the planet. And I think that’s the conversation we need to have.” (ca. TC 00:36:08)

Other typical visual repetitions revolve around the topics of fossil fuel power plants (e.g. oil, gas and coal) (ca. TC 00:08:51) and different forms of consumption (animation shows massive misuse of palm oil in products by many brands around the world, ca. TC 00:47:31). Further issues are pollution and floodings (e.g. streets of Miami, ca. TC 00:20:15 - 00:21:01). Several more are deranged, degraded or destroyed natural landscapes or habitats (e.g. underwater coral reefs, ca. TC 00:44:12 - 00:45:00), exploitation of resources, deforestation (e.g. lumbering of the Brazilian Amazon as a time-lapse, ca. TC 00:51:27 - 00:51:38), and connatural subjects. All of the before-mentioned are somehow orbiting around culpable human intervention, consequences of extending the anthroposphere and aftereffects of global warming on the earth’s ecosystem.

As the bottom line, DiCaprio concludes his reminiscence and art piece interpretation of the Hieronymus Bosch triptych on oak with the words “We’re in that second panel what Bosch called ‘Humankind before the Flood’ [underlined by the author]” (ca. TC 01:25:30) that inspired the name of the film. This notion close to the film’s end also brings the storyline full circle.

What key transferable lessons do such visual repetitions bring to altruistic filmmaking?

Repetitions are extremely forceful in many walks of life. Prominent examples are from psychology and general learning theory such as “deliberate practice” (cf. Ericsson & Pool, 2016) in sports, music, education and numerous other domains of

expertise. There are various types of repetitions and restatements in linguistics as rhetorical devices, for instance, conduplicatio, anaphora, epistrophe, diacope, and more. (cf. Harris, 2017) Coherent with that, repetitious rhetoric (e.g. as a means of persuasion) is also well-known in marketing, sales, (political) orations, sermons, advertising, media publications and forms of propaganda (explications and further insights can be gained from Soules, 2015, for instance).

“Lakoff’s theory of ‘neural recruitment’ proposes that repetition – of talking points, phrases, metaphors and other figures of speech – comes to dominate thinking. Constant repetition establishes familiar neural pathways for arguments to travel along. Examples of neural recruitment include ‘war on terror’, ‘liberal media’, ‘lower taxes’, ‘declining markets’ and ‘global warming’.” (Soules, 2015, p. 98)

Thus, films that instrumentalise this proven technique improve their likelihood of approximating their mission’s goals while they should be conscious of the accountability that comes with the appliance of these practices.

Before the Flood (2016) makes premeditated and passionate use of this strategy of recurrences, including assertive imagery, ideogrammatic depictions, montage sequences and multi-layered meaning levels.

Altruistic filmmakers can draw from this knowledge to enhance their probability of mobilising audiences, creating a sense of urgency, improving their awareness-raising effect and comprehensibility, and thus leaving a lasting, credible, authentic and emotionalising impression on their audience. In comparison, several sections of chapter seven presented examples that employ these tactics in the RFPD documentary.

3) Symbolism (as Stylistic Devices) and Metaphors

The film’s semiotic structure and stylistic devices comprise moderately simple, easily comprehensible and straightforward symbolism and metaphors with optional collateral levels of meaning.

The principle of such a formula is palpable and presented (in)directly through the course of the film. So, reasons are, first and foremost, to infuse a broader audience without risking misinterpretation, communicate the subtext swiftly and persuade effectively, and ultimately educe emotions without a detour through complex reasoning or an obligatory analysis by the audience.

As hinted at in the segment on visual repetitions above, the film focuses on pictorial language as “triggers” that make ideas “contagious” (Berger, 2013) and are in a league of “[t]op of mind leads to tip of tongue.” (Berger, 2013, p. 23)

This strategy is what the film does on the first, superordinate and intelligible layer of understanding. For example, crowds, industrial pollution, smoke and quantities of traffic in bustling streets of metropolitan areas around the globe are portrayed and correlated with text passages in such a perspicuous manner that they downright schematically represent what the textual layer exactly contains in close temporal vicinity. The patterns are so frequent that one may pick congeneric examples from almost every section of the film.

TC 00:46:30, DiCaprio in a helicopter above Sumatra, Indonesia (Off):
“Wow, this haze is intense, isn’t it?”

Imagery (coinstantaneous plus temporally surrounded by): Aerial view from a helicopter flying across a burning forest amid dense haze, fume, dust, and pollution clouds from wildland fires.

There are several parts of the movie, though, that surpass trivial symbolic meanings and offer a deeper interpretable understanding of circumstances or a broader concept.

Such sequences in the film include at least the following three:

- 1) The Hieronymus Bosch painting and its connections to rhetoric, spoken language, and vivid imagery throughout the film is a noteworthy example. (See detailed explication below this list).
- 2) Several montage sequences that resemble the style, intentions and emotional potential of the so-called “montage of attractions” [translated] by Eisenstein (2006) are enwrought into the film’s fabric.
- 3) TV footage montage sequences and their multi-faceted connotations equally fulfil several functions, such as historical contextualisation, mapping the problem as a dramatised climactic heightening in contemporary history and as an underpinning of the film’s statements’ verisimilitude through conflating evidence.

As touched upon above, DiCaprio decodes and expounds on the Bosch painting as portraying a particular story from paradise to doom. Paraphrasing and interpreting his explanation (cf. ca. TC 00:01:34 - 00:02:26), it depicts a multi-step deterioration

from a paradise-like state in the left or first panel through the vividly illustrated stages of squandering, decadence and corruption (including the cardinal sins and the Fall of Man) in the second panel. The third panel then finishes with a nightmare-like depiction of “this twisted, decayed, burned landscape. A paradise that has been degraded and destroyed” (DiCaprio [VO], TC 00:02:15) in the upper corner of this right panel. This thesis would even presume that this narrative arc dovetails seemingly irreversible stages of demise until nemesis, destruction and doom menacing for nature and civilisation.

A transition or metamorphosis to an expediting montage sequence (ca. TC 00:02:25 - 00:03:08) then analogously expresses the signs of anthropogenic hazards for our planet, the outcomes of climate change and fierce devastating TV footage and audio commentary assailing with tragedies (melting icebergs, floodings, woodland fires, storms, hurricanes and other untamed environmental disasters). This anteriormost elucidatory example of “montage of attractions” [translated] (Eisenstein, 2006) functions as the exposition to dramatise, synopsisize, and condense the issues and topics that the film addresses and undeniably initialises the bond between the Hieronymus Bosch artwork and the film’s narrative.

Allusions, metaphorical correspondences, visual analogies, intellectual reflections on the interlarded artistic essence reappear in the film’s ensuing progression in divergent forms and with varying severity.

4) Camera Concept (e.g. Style, Perspectives, Movements & Zoom, Picture Composition/Framing, Special Features)

The overall camera concept derived from the film analysis consists of five different footage components that constitute the film *Before the Flood* (2016).

The first of these are self-created first-hand travel footage sequences with Leonardo DiCaprio during his voyages across seas, via several mainlands and at least these itemised countries: USA, Canada, (Canadian Arctic), Greenland (Denmark), China, India, Kiribati, Palau, Sumatra (Indonesia), Argentina, Sweden, France, Italy, and the Vatican City. The camera concept analysis will refer to this travel footage and the second type of footage.

The second type of recordings is combined travel crew behind-the-scenes footage of the general documentary and from the set of *The Revenant* (2016) specifically. (This footage is understandably technically and aesthetically very similar to the journey footage above. However, it distinguishes itself since it follows a separate storyline that should be considered deviated from the travels above.)

As a third ingredient, all sorts of variform present-day and sepia-style old-fashioned TV news, report or magazine-style footage is integrated into the film. (For further analysis, see segment 6.)

A fourth additive to the footage mix is factful animations with resemblant visualisation styles and habitually incorporated graphs, charts, and easily digestible data sets. (cf. segment 7.)

The fifth distinct type of content within the film are purpose-built montage sequences splicing stock footage from multiple sources such as the Associated Press, BBC Motion Gallery, Framepool, Getty Images, ITN Source/Reuters, NASA, Pond5 (cf. end credits of *Before the Flood*, 2016), and numerous others. (cf. segment 6.)

In analysing the camerawork more closely, it is valuable for altruistic filmmaking to shine a light on critical components that the film is manifestly applying to achieve its underlying agenda proximate to known charity films. This plan comprises, in a nutshell, instilling a heartfelt connection to the leading character, convincing the spectators of a factual predicament, exuding probity and dependability, inculcating a sense of requisiteness, and ultimately guiding the spectators to take action themselves. The latter could be through active participation, campaigning, spreading awareness as goodwill ambassadors, donating, and other virtuous advocacy disciplines.

To pursue these or equivalent aspirations, the feature adopts signature camerawork, notably (but not solely) for this film's self-taken travel footage. This craftwork involves accompanying the central actor in the most perceptibly dynamic fashion feasible, with an array of ostensibly adventitious moments as if the camera were discovering the world while companion him on his quest.

Precisely, the recurring ilks of shots comprise two virtually diametrically opposed modes to emphasise here:

Mode 1:

- Shoulder-held tracking shots to accompany the character even as the operator moves (i.e. unstable and wobbling), as if the watcher is walking along. (e.g. cf. substantial parts of the Elon Musk walking interview, TC 00:57:03 - 00:58:53)

- Shaky counter-shots, cut-aways and inserts even when all protagonists are stationary. Often the take could undoubtedly have comfortably been executed smoothly and statically, or at least more steadily. The former is notwithstanding a well-established technique that lends to the genuineness of the moment. This bouncy purposefully opted style has previously been covered in detail above with pointers to Dager (16th November 2016 [online]).
- Working pans or choppy camerawork (i.e. technically unsubtle or performed sloppy because they originated in the cameraperson's quick frame change or jerky body movement but atypically wind up in the final product) contribute to the impression of the spontaneity of the scenes.
- Crudely executed zoom shots to re-frame the composition (normally not visible in such high-quality films)
- Refocusing and needlessly exposed non-creative focus shifts
- Perceptible axial jumps in the edit (non-compliance with "the 180° rule"; for explanation see, e.g. Morales Morante, 2017, pp. 78-80; also cf. Keutzer et al., 2014, pp. 166-173)

It would have been possible to shoot these scenes (more) stabilised while discarding imperfections. In furtherance of the indices from Dager (16th November 2016 [online]), it is convictive to postulate that these shot combinations reflect well-defined artistic judgements with a univocal intent. At least several of these artistic decisions would most likely determine the camera strategy as "living camera" as an "authenticity signal" [translated by the author] in the "semio-pragmatics of >authentic< representations" [translated by the author] according to Hißnauer (2011, p. 133).

Mode 2:

- High-quality and superbly orchestrated aerial captures
- Elaborate, visually stunning and proficient underwater filming (e.g. cf. TC 00:43:21 - 00:43:36)
- Moving stabilised gimbal shots
- Professional, smooth pans and stationary recordings
- Aesthetic slow-motion imagery

Ultimately, these two distinguishable categories of footage should most likely facilitate the accomplishment of the targets mentioned above, specifically in interplay with the other (third-party) source material examined earlier.

5) Lighting Approach (e.g. Indoor, Outdoor/Daylight, Natural)

When assessing the original often outdoors travel documentary footage perused in segment “4. Camera Concept”, the corresponding lighting concept for these sequences is pretty straightforward. As Dager’s (16th November 2016 [online]) article expectably reveals about DoP Rossi’s work, the majority of sequences captured for this documentary relied on available natural lighting, about the looks of which Rossi was pleased.

This approach is typical lighting in documentary filmmaking in general. Filmmakers frequently intentionally chose it for multiple thoughtful, conceptual and practical reasons. It is thus not unique to altruistic or charity filmmaking, yet often the first and best choice.

Similar to other academics, Blank (2015) argues in *Film & Light* that “[o]nly the ‘natural’ light source conveys the ‘natural’, ‘realistic effect’ to the two-dimensional image” (Blank, 2015, p. 19) and continues that “the rule book of lighting is subject to a contextual principle which is expressed with verve by Jost Vacano: ‘I am a fanatical proponent of a certain realism ... the audience should have the impression, they are experiencing the scene themselves.’” (Blank, 2015, p. 19) In other words and on this note, lighting reinforcing a lifelike semblance of the filmic plot, environment and setting or true-to-life illumination in general as applied by *Before the Flood* (2016) permits the viewer to immerse themselves like in a holistic experience, especially when “[t]he film offers the audience the illusion of reality by means of the right lighting.” (Blank, 2015, p. 20)

Other practical reasons for embarking on this strategy are consideration of time, less interference with the authentic scene, capturing the quickness of action, resource allocation, reduced exertion to haul much lighting and more. That is why travel documentary filmmakers widely avail such an approach. It also consumes less time setting up on location and for teardown, reducing the crew and keeping the budget low.

Here are some further insights from professional practice: Evenly substantial is the effect or impact of an elaborate lighting setup on individuals acting in that environment in front of the camera. Non-actors or lay people are often not used to being featured or presented to an audience in the spotlight. Their actions, behaviour, and appearance will thus doubtless be significantly altered when putting them in an artful setup but consequently also a lighting environment of artificial

touch and feel. Multiple hot lamps also radiate much heat in a closed compartment and thus alter the body sensation for everyone inside. These reasons naturally apply to altruistic filmmaking, with cost-awareness and trustworthiness as two of its vital cornerstones.

Accordingly, in this films' original footage, there are predominantly four different types of lighting situations:

1) Footage shot outdoors, mainly in the daytime and with available natural light. The film extensively employs this kind of visuals.

Examples:

Practically everything filmed with Climatologist Jason E. Box in Kangerlussuaq (cf. ca. TC 00:17:38 - 00:19:38) was shot outdoors, with available light only. The same is correct for the onsite outdoor production with the Founding Director of the Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs (China), Ma Jun (but only) in the streets of Beijing (cf. ca. TC 00:29:44 - 00:30:25), and the Conservation Director of the Paneco Foundation, Ian Singleton, with the orangutan in Indonesia (cf. ca. TC 00:49:27 - 00:50:15).

2) Footage shot indoors, primarily during daytime and with available light, sometimes possibly if at all brightened up by a headlight or perhaps with an additional portable folding reflector. This setup is typical of ENG-style TV productions for newsgathering, reports, magazines or other short forms of TV documentary.

Examples:

The DoP of the documentary embraces this ENG-style documentary practice on multiple occasions, such as for capturing DiCaprio audience with the Pope in the Vatican City (TC 00:01:24.04 - 01:24:47) and for all of the indoor takes of the sequence on the Paris Climate Summit 2015 (COP21/CMP11) (TC 01:09:34 - 01:11:28).

3) Footage shot indoor, mainly during the day but in a standard interview setup, where DiCaprio interviews his counterpart in a sitting or standing position. Analysing the lighting environments, these look like variations of traditional three-point lighting (key, fill and backlight) (cf. Millerson, 2013; cf. Dunker, 2014). This lighting technique regularly involves reinforcing existing light and often lightens up dimmer areas indoors to fit more adequately with the brighter outdoor light that occasionally streams into the shots from the back or side.

Examples:

Among examples that fit the above-described realisation are the indoor interview perspectives with Gregory Mankiw, Professor of Economics, Harvard University (TC 00:59:48 - 01:02:28) and Alvin Lin, China Climate and Energy Policy Director, Natural Resources Defense Council (ca. TC 00:32:44 - 00:33:05), for instance.

4) Footage captured indoor but in artificial light situations - either specially designed or used from unnatural light sources. Although this type of material distinctly differentiates itself from other footage in the film, it is seldomly employed.

Examples:

An incontrovertible case is an explanatory interview and discussion sequence with the NASA astronaut Piers Sellers (Director, Earth Sciences Division, NASA/GSFC; meanwhile deceased) in some screening or weather and climate simulation room. (ca. TC 01:16:27 - 01:16:32, then 01:17:00 - 01:22:05) While this is a fairly unique film sequence, the magnificent multi-part LCD backdrop seems to be the only perceptible light source across most extended perspectives. This style is also called “contre-jour lighting” within diffuse lighting (cf. Millerson, 2013), but in this case, against this display as the backlight, that often artfully exhibits the protagonists’ dark shapes with their contours or silhouettes against the screen.

This entire mise-en-scène thereby receives an outer-worldly touch, letting the viewers envision the planet earth from outer space (maybe from an orbital distance). It facilitates imparting an all-encompassing picture of the current scientific body of knowledge on climate change, its future developments and ramifications. It visualises their relevancy, seriousness and potency from a border-transcendent, transfixing and artful slant.

6) Editing/Cutting (Unique Principles of Montage)

Approach in General

Editing or montage as a component of the grammar of the film language (cf. Arijon, 1991) is always a central component of the film analysis. (e.g. Kuchenbuch, 2005; Keutzer et al., 2014; Mikos, 2015) Adhering to Morales Morante’s (2017) “Theoretical Model of Editing” and considering his explanations about “Spatio-Temporal Perception” (Morales Morante, 2017, pp. 93-96), I abstract that it is essential to create a continuous experience, form, shape and retain “perceptual coherence and plausibility” (Morales Morante, 2017, p. 94) for “spatial”, “temporal” and “visual relationships” (ibid.) with the protagonists to replenish the audience’s

excitement, create unique, memorable moments and empower the structure of each film and its story.

According to Faulstich (2013), in film analysis, time (differentiated into the regularly diverging narrative time and narrated time) assumes a crucial function in a storyline. Due to these apparent deviations between narrative time and narrated time, various forms of time or timing alterations in films are essential and influential (e.g. time transitions, flashbacks, time-lapses, slow-motion, skips in time). Detailed examination of all relevant time affecting factors frequently reveals all the constituents of the film's edifice. (Faulstich, 2013) The editing process then is the corresponding practical execution and substantially synthesises all structuring and meaning-giving influencing factors of the story.

This understanding is particularly valid when combining multiple different types of visual imagery, footage qualities, aspect ratios, and other technical distinctions. These are – like in *Before the Flood* (2016) – subordinated to serve higher aims, such as awareness-raising, moving its audiences, creating social impacts and getting people to vote, buy and act differently in their everyday lives. (cf. several earlier chapters on “awareness-raising” and more, cf. chapter four within the segment on the psychology of persuasion, plus cf. the end titles before the film credits) These procedures are prevalent and frequently embraced in altruistic or charity filmmaking.

Together with DiCaprio and the set of four credited editors (IMDB – *Before the Flood*, 2016 [online]), director Fisher Stevens manifestly subordinated a lot of their creative choices to the objectives of the final result. This superordinate decision makes sense for many altruistic and charity films, arguably for multiple reasons.

Reasons

“Form ever follows function” is a term that was coined by the skyscraper architect Louis H. Sullivan (cf. 1896), but most recognised and utilised around the globe without the word “ever”.

This maxim described the essence of a functionalist approach and was applied initially as a postulate regarding late 19th/early 20th century creations of architects or in industrial design projects (e.g. cf. Krippendorff, 2005) but managed its way into descriptions of many different areas of design (software/web design, fashion, vehicles, furniture, products and more). (e.g. Sparke, 2013; Golombisky & Hagen, 2017) The adage is often overcast by the halo of its negative connotation or

implication, i.e. the potential to reduce design singularly to its necessities and pure functionality while ignoring features such as beauty, appeal, emotions or similar attributes altogether. The latter is not what is meant in this context, though, since *Before the Flood* (2016) features many formidable and artistic, for example, aerial shots, sophisticated scenes and exciting visual compositions that neither lack appeal nor are solely utilitarian.

Examples of such beauty shots, creatively orchestrated sequences, spellbinding imagery or artistically polished post-production are presented throughout the analysis. Aerials of the Canadian Arctic (e.g. TC 00:13:05 - 00:13:31, then 00:13:39 - 00:13:59), the central Pacific-Ocean paradise Republic of Kiribati (Oceania) (e.g. TC 00:40:25 - 00:40:33), state-of-the-art wind and solar panel parks and collectors in a montage sequence spanning aerials from Germany, Denmark, Italy and Spain (ca. TC 01:08:09 - 01:08:41), as well as impressive brooding and foreboding recordings of massive fossil fuel mining, extractions, operations and plants (e.g. TC 00:11:31 - 00:12:13), are among those.

“Today, the dictum [form follows function] is often understood, and employed, simply as an exhortation to design things (products, layouts, websites etc.) in a purposeful manner, in the sense of fitting aesthetic solutions to non-aesthetic functional requirements in such ways that ‘aesthetics’ does not collide with ‘function’.” (Michl, 30 January 2018 [online])

Still, this thesis wants to interpret “form follows function” (as discussed by the above academics and others) as an edict that applies to the film in an even more nuanced way so that the intention, mission, and meaning (as a “function”) were intentionally put first. Thus the technical limitations or restrictions were lowered to follow this higher-ranking function (i.e. the altruistic/charitable mission of the film).

Thus advocacy, content, and the narrative goals seem to have been hierarchically higher than a filmmaker’s typical intention to attain homogenous quality throughout the film. This ranking appears to apply a conventional set of preferences in “altruistic filmmaking” as copious other (parade) examples like Stephen Emmott’s *Ten Billion* (2015) and Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power* (2017) suggest.

Likewise, the choice of content, especially that which encourages action and conduces mobilisation or emotional bonding (e.g. cf. chapters four and five) as

goals of charity filmmaking, are repeatedly preferred compared to artistic qualities and technical specifications of the final product.

Another advantage for proficient charity films like *Before the Flood* (2016) is that when teaming up with partners like “National Geographic” or a prominent NGO with video resources, filmmakers could draw footage from expansive libraries (as noticeable from the long list of footage credits at the end of *Before the Flood*, 2016). Many charity films will not have this advantage.

Still, it is worth learning from *Before the Flood* (2016) and knowing from Anderson-Moore (2015 [online]) and others that comprehensive databases like NASA, Hubble Space Telescope Videos, National Park Service B-Roll Video and more are largely for free use. These video archives routinely mandate checking and abiding by distinct stipulations such as Creative Commons licenses or free use within the public domain framework. (cf. Anderson-Moore, 2015 [online])

When considering other partners possibly open to embarking on a joint charitable effort, other filmmakers may be able to implement such a strategy, where applicable.

It is also the reality of technological evolution that when “quoting”, referencing and implementing film material from previous decades, such segments will understandably seldom resemble the expectations of present-day standards in cinematography.

Technical Details

The creators are combining TV news and broadcasting footage in 4:3 aspect ratio with only a fraction of the image resolution of 4K’s 3840x2160 px (i.e. presumably NTSC with 640x480 px, square pixels, 59.94fps, interlace) on multiple occurrences with HDTV footage (presumptively 1920x1080 px, 16:9, 30fps or higher, progressive). Examples are the June 1992 speech of George H. W. Bush (TC 01:03:22 - 01:03:35) and many other 4:3 TV format inclusions. Even excerpts from an implemented old science series TV show with educational purposes by Bell Laboratories (ca. TC 00:27:58 - 00:29:08) highlight that the problems portrayed in *Before the Flood* (2016) have been known at least since the 1950s and persist today.

In addition to that, the team crafted their travel footage with DiCaprio by recording 4K (verisimilar 3840x2160, 16:9, progressive) with multiple cameras, as reported by Dager (16th November 2016 [online]). Moreover, stills of varying quality

and animations (probably of the best available quality, i.e. 4K) were interspersed in the mix.

This confluence of images of varying quality combines into a compilation in *Before the Flood* (2016). It thereby attests to the relationship with or its origins in elements of video activism as in “[m]ash-up media practices” (Askanius, 2012a, p. 102) where such “[o]nline videos are often accused of parading quantity over quality” (Askanius, 2012a, p. 102). “Video activism” (as the umbrella term) also frequently integrates footage with the purposes to protest, educate, bear witness and more to foster social change (Mateos & Gaona, 2015) in the first place.

At the same time, there might or might not be an artistic will when involving “not only techno-geeks and social activists, but a pot-pourri of amateur videographers, video diarists, video artists, self-proclaimed documentary filmmakers, communities, and individuals uploading seemingly raw or roughly edited cell phone footage” (Askanius, 2014, p. 460) in forms of video activism (Askanius, 2014). One can reasonably surmise that there is often little volition or merely limited prowess to create refined fine arts pieces in such practices.

Mateos & Gaona (2015) collected and highlighted contributions and aims of video activism manifestations “whether in the form of an audiovisual work, an educational/didactic activity or a collective viewing of a film” (Mateos & Gaona, 2015, p. 11) from assorted authors under the terms witness, action, meaning and signification, identity, and empowerment.

While broached goals demonstrably overlap, in contrast, artistic practice and cinematographic intention are much more preeminent in charity documentary filmmaking, as *Before the Flood* (2016) confers in various other ways.

This juxtaposition of various footage types is thereby also an excellent example of the evolution of charity filmmaking from video activism. Other mobilising educational or enlightening documentaries like *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), *Food, Inc.* (2008), *Goldman Sachs - The Bank That Rules the World* (2012), and *System Error* (2018) evenly make use of diverse levels of image quality, stills, stock footage or TV footage or from other sources, for the pure sake of bringing their points across. However, the footage variability might vary in frequency, multitude, or magnitude.

It is thus arguably not a necessary precondition for altruistic films but a widely-used prototypical option that empowers such films with nuanced credibility and supports

their mission and drive. Filmmakers are thus potentially able to stand on the “shoulders of giants” (known from scientific research) by quoting and implementing their work as journalists would into their final composition.

Editing in General

Here are some final remarks on the editing and grading in general. Although the film has been nominated severalfold, won awards and includes plenteous masterful, i.e. virtuoso content, collocated in a fast-paced, never bland modern edit, the film has more than just a few imperfect elements.

Examining the final grading makes it unmissable even for a novice that even alfresco shots with slightly different white balances seem not to have been appropriately adjusted at times.

Diverse outdoor weather situations, clouds, time of the day, direct/indirect sunlight exposure and similar aspects that affect the colours of a recording need to be fine-tuned precisely throughout any film. Overall, it appears that in coherence with accepting different quality levels of the footage, the team must have decided not to spend more time on such details.

One of the examples of clearly offset whites is the blue-shaded outdoor sequence filmed in the shade with Iñárritu and DiCaprio at the foot of the mountains in Ushuaia, Argentina. (TC 00:54:59 - 00:55:34) Another sequence is the extremely roughly edited, shaky, tenebrous part of the establishing scene in the streets of New Delhi, India, possibly shot at dusk, on a dim or fogged day or partially underexposed (TC 00:33:38 - 00:33:53), unlike some earlier shots (from TC 00:33:26 - 00:33:33) and follow-up brighter scene it establishes (from TC 00:34:05). Some of the establishing street life shots are graded far too dark, most of them are shaded blue, and all of them are very wobbly and highly unsteady (it becomes less unfirm at around TC 00:34:28).

These stylistic decisions are pertinent because this absence of a perfectionist guideline likewise relates to the functionalist approach. The adopted procedure seems to add a more rough, imperfect and thus perhaps more credible or factual look to the film. Since Stevens wanted a variable handheld look anyhow (cf. Dager, 16th November 2016 [online]) and because the equivalent slightly unpolished editing appears in other parts of the film’s cut, this strategy even augments the linkage to “video activism” as a related term.

Other components that resemble this approach are the heavily edited interview audio sequences, where for example, answers or explanations are rough-cut multiple times within just a single sentence (i.e. likely omitting parts or rephrasing sentences), where listeners can ordinarily hear the weakly concealed edits and incompletely posed questions. (e.g. from TC 00:23:41 - 00:24:21) They could have also been re-done on the spot, or they could have prepared more well-wrought questions from the beginning. (For more, see segment 8. Audio: Rhetoric, Speech, Language & Cognitive Biases).

The roughness in audio-editing stated above also indicates that a trained listener can detect many cuts (and corresponding probable omissions), while more proficient transitions would have hidden additional parts of that imprecision. On the other hand, one could claim that this adds points to the credibility factor of the film. Some heavily edited parts like the interview with Michael E. Mann (Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science, Penn State University) (ca. TC 00:23:06 - 00:27:58) are combined with other animations and other TV content though. These rough-cut sentences did not always make the best impressions in this analysis. However, this may be just personal preference.

Moreover, as argued before, this fits the intermittent jolting and shakiness of the shoulder-camera/handheld style, the occasionally inaccurate timing and the inchoate cohesion of colour aesthetics. These stylistic elements are also in stark contrast to the periodically stunning aerial shots and National Geographic (and others') stock footage, which add authenticity and credibility on the one hand and scenic beauty, expressiveness and dazzling imagery of the paradise on the other side. It also fits the juxtaposed, comparative description of the panels – especially panel two – of the oil painting by Hieronymus Bosch.

7) Animations, Titles, Graphs & Charts

“The use of animation within otherwise live-action documentary continues today and animated sequences are often used as a communicative aid to clarify, explain, illustrate and emphasise. Animated diagrams, charts, graphs and maps are” (Roe, 2014, p. 178) prevalent in some forms of communication media and occurrences of documentary filmmaking and news. (Roe, 2014) These graphic renditions may be too trivial for some scholars or not a prerequisite for the particular branch of documentary filmmaking they researched, so these forms of visualisation have seldomly played a significant role in scientific discussions in film studies. Annabelle

Honess Roe (2014, p. 178) even characterises them as “unremarkable” because they are so mundane.

There are many classical textbooks about film language or film analysis, such as Arijon (1991), Kuchenbuch (2005), Faulstich (2013) and Mikos (2015). None of these substantially discusses the complex animations of this segment as a stylistic device or means of semiotic expression and thus possible visualisation techniques in films.

Nevertheless, these visual elements constitute a significant and influential portion (in terms of duration and intensity) of the film *Before the Flood* (2016) and transport a considerable amount of information (without discussing their validity and soundness here). Furthermore, they are deployed as evidence to persuade, potentially manipulate, and ultimately request action from the audience.

A trenchant example in the film is a type of flow chart animation including corporation logos of entities such as ExxonMobil, Shell, bp, Valero, and Chevron and how these are indirectly financing and bolstering subjects like climate change denialism. (ca. from TC 00:25:04) This graphic animation with an accompanying commentary voice-over by Mann (Penn State University) further divulges and explicates how, for instance, Koch Industries, Inc. payrolls “politicians”, “political action committee’s (PAC’s)”, and “think tanks” directly while having illustriously or grandiloquently named front groups (like “Americans for Prosperity”).

Meanwhile, Mann expositis frankly: “Folks like the Koch brothers finance a very large echo chamber of climate change denialism.” (TC 00:25:07) He continues that “Koch Industries is one of the largest privately-held fossil fuel interest in the world” (TC 00:26:12). The presentation style is educational, supported by his accolades, titles and position at the renowned Penn State University, which are a part of presenting him as an eminent authority and expert on the topic and consequently convincing the audience.

Because these stylistic devices are conventional among the sample of films considered “charity filmmaking”, their function, structure and implementation are highlighted in this segment. Some of these example documentaries are *Trashed* (2012), *Fed Up* (2014), and *Food Chains* (2014).

How do they appear in the film?

There are chiefly four types of visualisations utilised as graphs and charts to present data as scientifically as possible.

- 1) (Rich-)text- & numbers-based animations (incl. lists)
- 2) Graphs, charts & maps
- 3) Logo, symbol and icon animations
- 4) Other image-based animations, relational graphics and explainer video animations

At least several of these graphs and animations could undoubtedly fit into a stylish business PowerPoint, Keynote or Prezi presentation on economics, ecology or climate change. Again, this does not imply validating or falsifying any of the depicted content within the motion graphics.

Positive Aspects

Some of the positive aspects of these types of animations and their implementation into documentary films are that they are incomplex, catchy, and easy to understand. Additionally, they support memorability, are an attractive and appealing alternative visualisation solution that adds to the variety of the film and are thus an effective way to illustrate abstract or conceptual matters, where traditional footage would not be as appropriate, vivid or striking.

Negative Aspects

Some of the downsides are that such graphics and animations could quickly go astray and misrepresent information in a prejudiced or pejorative way. They could include sided or tendentious implications. Since they are delimited to a specific duration (i.e. screen-time), the audience does not always have the required time to painstakingly scrutinise and detect things like leaning, over-simplification, embedded biases, cognitive dissonance exploitation or otherwise objectionable misrepresentations.

Learnings & efficacious options on how to use animations in charity filmmaking

All-in-all, one could argue that such animations are an excellent form of visualising complex content, achieving better memorability levels, and simplifying topics that are too abstract to depict with real-life footage only. It is thus the responsibility of any ethically acting filmmaker to employ such content with extra precaution and supervision because it regularly has a scientific appearance that could unquestionably manipulate the viewer's understanding of a subject matter. At the same time, a decent background examination is ordinarily unavailable.

Such elements are consequently beneficial for altruistic filmmaking, for they can add written calls-to-action and valuable (if legitimate) profound substantiations to the film's claims. They can also foster the credibility, level of authority and trustworthiness of a charity film and convey its mission and purposes. It is always better to hear (e.g. from a protagonist), perceive (e.g. in such graphics) and feel (e.g. through emotions of the scenes) the content in cohesion. This multi-sensorial communication reinforces the message.

Comparably, such an inclusionary concept to simultaneously mesh two of the following three 1) narration, 2) appropriate illustrations, and 3) elucidative text elements, is an empirically substantiated principle in e-learning, best known as the "multimedia principle" (Clark & Mayer, 2016) "In recent years, the multimedia principle has been recognized as one of the most well-established principles of learning that can be applied to education." (Clark & Mayer, 2016, p. 79) The film regularly does precisely that: Intertwining texts with voice-over or graphics with narration/commentary.

At the movie's end, one particularly propitious or auspicious set of animations is the call-to-action texts. They summarise the notions of the film and its recommendations after ca. 90 Min of watching sequences that are composed and arranged to substantiate the message cogently:

TC 01:29:31 - Full-Screen Text (without typographical formatting/emphasis)

"IT IS UP TO ALL OF US"

TC 01:29:39

"CONSUME DIFFERENTLY

WHAT YOU BUY

WHAT YOU EAT

HOW YOU GET YOUR POWER"

TC 01:29:49

"VOTE FOR LEADERS WHO WILL FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE BY

ENDING FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES

INVESTING IN RENEWABLES

LEAVING FOSSIL FUELS IN THE GROUND

SUPPORTING A PRICE ON CARBON”

TC 01:30:00

“THIS FILM’S CARBON FOOTPRINT WAS OFFSET
BY PAYING A VOLUNTARY CARBON TAX.

THE FUNDS WILL SUPPORT EFFORTS TO
PROTECT CRITICAL RAINFORESTS.

DISCOVER YOUR CLIMATE IMPACT
AND HOW YOU CAN OFFSET IT, BY VISITING:

CARBOTAX.ORG”

TC 01:30:14

“LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION AT:
BEFORETHEFLOOD.COM”

8) Audio: Rhetoric, Speech, Language & Cognitive Biases

Although there would be many intriguing facets and subtleties to debate rhetoric as a stylistic device across *Before the Flood* (2016), this short segment will only zero in on such parts again that are relevant for charity filmmaking.

As argued in segment 6. Editing/Cutting (Unique Principles of Montage) above, there is a stark contrast between the sometimes-unsmoothed audio-editing of interviews alongside shaky camera movements and the stunning visuals of aerial shots, for instance. This comparison – thereby eliciting a feeling of authenticity, frankness and believability – is also matched by the verbal component.

The on-screen conversation, inquiries and remarks – especially those of DiCaprio – are rather ingenuous, easy-to-grasp and colloquial. Expletives with casual inarticulate or otherwise mediocre communication and even unfinished sentences/questions (e.g. sequence with astronaut Sellers, ca. TC 01:21:05 - 01:21:27) have been left in the final film too. These limitations are in sharp contrast to the sometimes proficient, artful, eloquent and persuasive language, elocution and oratory performance, for example, of the voice-over and segments from the inaugural address (from TC 00:04:27 - 00:05:19) and as an example par

excellence, the final report as a UN Messenger of Peace (from TC 01:27:07 - 01:29:26) by DiCaprio before the United Nations in New York. The first-named weaker ingredients are also on the other end of the spectrum of the multifariousness to the regularly masterfully crafted montage sequences, their fast-paced, compelling and persuasive images and the sense of urgency and various intense emotional reactions they evoke.

The linguistic parlance of DiCaprio with multiple world leaders, entrepreneurs and thinkers that he appears to have had a connection with before (like Kerry, Obama or Musk) is a somewhat conversational buddy-style. It often emanates authenticity and involves ostensibly spontaneous factors, although one cannot know that for sure.

The questions that DiCaprio poses are regularly so low-level, blunt and candid that anyone could have asked tantamount questions without preparation. They at least appear weakly thought-out, extemporised or often even unprepared. His reactions to some of the answers sound believably astonished, while he continues to embrace a non-highbrow type of conversation. Even occasional stutters, word repetitions, and other comparable details that an editor would typically remove made it into the final result.

Conclusively, one could argue that a quintessential part of the potency and impressiveness of the film prevails within the diversity of the succeeding two integral components.

Firstly, jetting around between leading scientists and eminent scholars, Arctic or submarine explorers, the world's decision-making politicians and entrepreneurs, colloquially chatting with them "as if" they are the guy next door.

Furthermore, secondly, merging that with riveting, striking and formidable visual rhetorical and semiotic elements and imposing montage sequences as particularised in previous segments, this appears to make up the intensity and backbone of the film that ends with the following speech, loaded with tenacity, demands, urgency, dignity and grandeur. It furthermore signifies the climax and amplifies the emotional ties and likability of the protagonist and his sincerity to champion the worthy cause in front of this influential house.

DiCaprio in front of the UN General Assembly in New York (TC 01:27:52 - 01:29:26) while flash-backs, fast-pacing overwhelming portrayals and elements of

the aforementioned “montage of attractions” [translated] (cf. Eisenstein, 2006) fly by as if in a timelapse recap:

“All that I have seen and learned on my journey has absolutely terrified me.

Now think about the shame that each of us will carry when our children and grandchildren look back and realise that we had the means of stopping this devastation but simply lacked the political will to do so.

Yes, we have achieved the Paris Agreement.

More countries have come together here to sign this agreement today than for any other cause in the history of humankind – and that is reason for hope – but unfortunately, the evidence shows us that will not be enough.

A massive change is required right now, one that leads to a new collective consciousness, a new collective evolution of the human race, inspired and enabled by a sense of urgency from all of you.

(...)

After 21 years of debates and conferences, it is time to declare no more talk, no more excuses, no more 10-year studies, no more allowing the fossil fuel companies to manipulate and dictate the science and policies that affect our future.

The world is now watching.

You will either be lauded by future generations or vilified by them.

You are the last best hope of Earth. We ask you to protect it, or we – and all living things we cherish – are history.”

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²² Note: All original German titles in square brackets were translated into English for chapter Literature & Resources by the author and prefixed to the brackets.

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