

# Expertise and Performative Legitimation in Consumer-led Governance Initiatives

- A Case Study of GoodWeave India

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# Abstract

The following thesis is an attempt to critically analyse the legitimation claims of Private Transnational Governance (PTGs) initiatives targeting child labour in the Indian carpet belt. Drawing upon the concept of performativity, the research will seek to problematize the tendency to perceive legitimacy in the myopic sense of quantifiable ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’. To address this issue, the study will use the lens of critical theory to operationalize an understanding of legitimacy as an inter-subjective quality, continuously shaped by processes of citationality, reiteration and discursive norms. The empirical findings of the study will be gathered by conducting deductive qualitative content analysis (QCA) of the legitimation claims circulated in the public material of an exemplary case study - GoodWeave India. As one of the foremost private governance initiatives operating in the field of child labour in India, the practices of GoodWeave India will offer significant insight into the prevailing trends of the wider field. One of the major themes that emerged from the QCA, was the recurring citation of ‘common sense’ norms that implicitly associate Neoliberal modes of governance as indicative of organizational effectiveness or *expertise*, and the noticeable absence of any reliable or objective indicators of performance. The findings of the study point to a series of worrying implications in the broader field. Primarily relating to a structural lack of democratic legitimacy for PTG initiatives, and more contextually, the continued normalization of Neoliberal forms of governance that have historically exacerbated patterns of child labour exploitation in India in recent decades.

*Key words:* Performativity, Legitimation, Child-Labour, GoodWeave, Neoliberalism

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# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background.....	3
1.1.1	Introducing the Case Study and Disposition.....	3
1.1.2	Child Labour in India.....	3
1.2	Rise of GoodWeave India.....	5
1.2.1	Domestic and Recent Criticisms.....	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Research Puzzle.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1	Orthodox Understandings of Legitimacy .....	13
4.1.1	Conceptualizing Legitimacy Beyond Borders.....	13
4.1.2	The Relegation of Democratic Narratives .....	14
4.2	‘From Performance to Performativity’ .....	15
4.3	Constructing an Analytical Framework.....	16
4.3.1	Legitimacy .....	16
4.3.2	Performativity .....	18
<b>5</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.1	Research Design .....	19
5.2	Sampling and Data Collection .....	20
5.3	Analysis .....	22
5.3.1	Limitations .....	23
<b>6</b>	<b>Analysis .....</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1	Expert-led Legitimation.....	24
6.1.1	Market-Driven Processes of Social Change .....	24
6.1.2	Quantification of Social Good .....	25
6.1.3	Expertise .....	26
6.2	Substantive Legitimation .....	26
6.2.1	Implementation of Pre-Existing Legislation.....	27
6.2.2	Human Rights as an Engine for Modernity .....	27
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion and Discussion.....</b>	<b>30</b>
7.1	Directions for Future Research .....	32

<b>8</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>33</b>
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# 1 Introduction

In recent decades, the expansion of free trade has presented a series of theoretical and empirical challenges to orthodox understandings of democratic legitimacy. Traditional state-centred models of democratic governance have been steadily eroded, both by an internationally competitive and borderless global economy, and the consolidation of neoliberalism as a prevailing paradigm of governance. (Hurrellman et al 2007; Steffek, 2003; Krahmman, 2017). The principle tenets of this paradigm consist of “privatization of the public sphere, deregulation of the corporate sector, and the lowering of income and corporate taxes, paid for with cuts to public spending” (Klein, 2014). Consequently, in the 1990s this led to a proliferation of private transnational regulatory arrangements comprising public and private actors targeting very specific issues that arose in the resulting governance gaps that emerged throughout much of the developing world (Dingwerth, 2017). Such actors have been further endowed with authority by global governance institutions such as the UN, through a range of informal and formal partnerships with NGOs, think-tanks, MNCs and other market-oriented actors (Gregoratti, 2010). Therefore, non-state actors operating in private transnational governance initiatives now play a preeminent role in the practical governance of development.

However, a broad body of literature has arisen in recent years criticising the democratic credentials of such systems. Private regulatory actors are often criticised for perceived deficits in so-called ‘input’ legitimacy, relating specifically to factors such as public accountability, transparency and democratic control (Krahmann, 2017). Recent empirical studies show that there has been a declining emphasis upon democratic legitimation in recent years (Dingwerth, 2017), in favour of demonstrating effectiveness through performance measurements (Krahmann, 2017).

One proposed means of squaring this circle has been through the inclusion of consumers into transnational regulatory actors, known as *consumocratic* systems of governance (Routh and Borghi, 2016). Such systems operate by using private actors such as NGOs, market-oriented actors and independent monitors to diffuse societal information to consumers through labelling, certification and public awareness-campaigns. This relay of

information then enables socially responsible consumers to utilise their market power and steer the behaviour of producers to comply with the normative agendas of global civil society. Thereby ‘injecting meaning into the liberal order’ (Dumas, 2017) whilst maintaining the developmentally conducive effects of free trade, and facilitating apolitical and extrajudicial development interventions (Routh and Borghi, 2016).

However, recent studies of private governance arrangements operating in the fields of health and security have highlighted the phenomenon of performative legitimation, defined as ‘the re-iteration of practices merely associated with effectiveness, rather than objective or reliable indications of performance’ (Krahmann, 2017). Although never applied to actors operating in the field of development, the socially constructed dimension of performative legitimation is particularly significant in the case of consumocratic governance for a number of key reasons. Firstly, the often immaterial and culturally relativistic nature of many development organisations’ desired outcomes, make performance measures difficult to reliably determine. Secondly, consumocratic systems rely upon the transmission of information to disparate consumers, making them especially prone to performative utterance that is merely associated with the desired outcome. Thirdly, in being driven by the normative objectives of foreign consumers, there is a danger of regulatory actors promoting actions and social aims, which may conform to the political and social biases of western consumers, rather than those of the immediate beneficiaries of regulations in the developing world.

At its most fundamental level, legitimacy broadly refers to the belief or perception that a rule or authority ought to be obeyed (Beetham, 1991, p.23). However, there are a variety of conceptual models that exist, with most recognizing at least two primary dimensions. These main dimensions broadly consist of, an institutions’ law or authority’s coincidence with public will and shared beliefs, and its practical capacity to deliver or enforce the desired social change. The issue of legitimacy is of perennial significance in the field of development, therefore, in a global environment characterised by an increasing reliance upon private transnational regulation, and consumer-led social responsibility, this poses an urgent and so far unfilled gap in the current literature. Using a lens of critical theory, the primary aim of this research will be to analyse the legitimation-claims of an exemplary consumocratic governance initiative, driven largely by the concept of performativity laid out by Krahmann (2017). The study will differentiate itself from the vast majority of other literature, by employing a critical perspective of legitimacy originating from a constructivist epistemological standpoint, which understands legitimacy as a performative construction of discursive processes, rather than a series of unreliably quantified social facts (Scharpf, 2002).

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 Introducing the Case Study and Disposition

One area of policy that has seen the largest proliferation of PTG initiatives is the issue of child labour. The consensus of literature on the issue of child labour in India explicitly links the core drivers of child labour exploitation with patterns of socio-economic and political marginalisation impacting rural communities, as the result of market-oriented Neoliberal reforms of the 1990s (Bales, 2004; Van Den Anker, 2004, p.102). Therefore, the issue of legitimacy is central to determining the broader implications of private market-based governance approaches as a sustainable development intervention in the field of child labour. Furthermore, as home to the largest number of child labourers in the world, India will offer key insights into the broader scope of PTG.

This section will begin by introducing the broader context of child labour, and give an overview of the chosen case study. This will be followed by a literature review surveying the current state of the literature, and in doing so will identify the key weaknesses and limitations of studies that employ orthodox frameworks of legitimacy. The following section will then introduce the research puzzle, and will motivate the incorporation of a performative lens to analyses of legitimation, directly referencing the gaps in the existing literature highlighted in the preceding section. Due to the theory-testing purpose of the study, a chapter will then be dedicated to outlining the full details of the theoretical framework, which the subsequent deductive analysis will be based upon. The research, design, methods and sampling choices will then be discussed followed by the full analysis of the relevant documentation. Finally, the thesis will conclude with a discussion of the results, and will seek to situate the findings in the context of the wider critical literature.

### 1.1.2 Child Labour in India



The topic of child labour is an issue of increasing urgency and renewed focus in global development discourse and practice. This renewed focus is evident in a broad range of official contemporary development strategies and governance structures, with child labour concerns relating explicitly to targets 8.7 and 16.2 in the Sustainable Development Goals agenda (UN, 2015). Moreover, , driven by the advocacy of international NGOs, human rights organisations and civil society actors, (Craig, 2010, p.43) virtually all countries have agreed to the prohibition of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 'worst forms of child labour' in addition to implementing various pieces of domestic legislation. As home to the largest number of child labourers in the world, India has become a centre point in the international discourse of child labour.

A significant deal of scholarly attention has been devoted to outlining the ways in which neoliberal reforms have altered both the concentration and severity of prevalent forms of child labour. The neoliberal reform period of the 1990s oversaw the rapid deregulation and privatisation of the Indian economy, and the retreat of state control over much of the social sphere (Sanghera, 2012, p.40). The resulting period of uneven growth produced social, economic, political and regional inequalities on an unfathomed scale (Sharma et al, 2002). According to Indian scholars, the consolidation of Indian neoliberalism, served to economically entrench pre-existing social inequality across lines of geographic and caste-based divides (Sanghera, 2012, p.50). In these conditions of inequality and resulting debt, systems of debt bondage and child labour exploitation began to proliferate - most famously in the production of hand-knotted Indian carpets destined for export markets. Whilst child labour had existed in a variety of forms until then, a range of Indian activists argue that the neoliberal reform period saw concentrated exacerbations of child labour practices in rural, deprived and socio-politically marginalised communities (Sanghera, 2012, p.42). These trends were most significantly pronounced along lines of caste, with some scholars estimating that over 90% of the India's child labourers belong to the lowest 'Dalit' caste (Bales, 2004, p.50).

The issue attracted international attention in the late 1980s, most significantly in the case of child labourers used in the production of goods destined for Western markets, such as hand knotted carpets. In light of the perceived failures of the Indian state to tackle the issue, and under the threat of boycotts from a range of countries in North America and Europe, there was a proliferation in non-state market oriented Private Transnational Governance (PTGs) initiatives in the early 1990s. Such initiatives constituted a resounding confirmation of the market-oriented logic of governance that defined the era, and accordingly received significant scholarly attention. PTGs operate through a series of complex

transnational regulatory arrangements between a range of market actors and consumers. They employ non-hierarchical market-based steering mechanisms (Risse, 2006) to influence the behaviour of their respective partners. Its proponents argue that private governance can effectively square the circle between economic objectives and social concerns, to allow market-forces to thrive whilst minimizing the social costs.

## 1.2 Rise of GoodWeave India

One of the foremost examples in the case of child labour in India is GoodWeave, formerly known as Rugmark. GoodWeave is an international private governance network, working to eradicate child labour in the carpet industry and to replicate its market-based approach in other sectors (GW India website, 2019). GoodWeave attempts to fulfil its social ‘mission’ by creating market demand for certified child-labour-free rugs, monitoring supply chains through partnering with local monitors, and ‘rescuing and educating child labourers’ that they find (idib)

The organisation was founded in the 1990s in direct response to the threat of boycotts from German trade unions. Its main operating strategy consists of monitoring the use of child labourers in the production of hand knotted carpets in rural factories in Northern India. This information is then relayed to Western consumers through a certification mechanism, in which carpets made by producers partnered with GoodWeave may carry GoodWeave’s smiley face logo, to assure consumers that the carpet was woven on child-free looms (GW India Website, 2019). By seeking to align the normative desires of Western ‘responsible’ consumers with the economic incentives of producers and exporters in India, GoodWeave offers a market-based approach to tackling child labour in rural India. In the mid 2000s this approach was widely regarded as the model for sustainable private governance (Seidman, 2012), inspiring similar initiatives such as Kaleen (Gourevitch and Lake, 2012, p.102), and GAPs own programme for monitoring cits supplier factories for child labour in India (Seidman, 2007). Furthermore, GoodWeave is widely renowned and acclaimed worldwide, with founder Kailash Satyarthi being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for his work with the organisation.

### 1.2.1 Domestic and Recent Criticisms

Despite international acclaim however, GoodWeave's approach has drawn a significant degree of criticism from domestic child labour activists in India. Critics argue that the continued normalisation of market-based modes of governance, fails to address the key underlying drivers of child labour. Furthermore, the continued emphasis upon promoting market-based practices as indicators of effectiveness, serves to depoliticise the political and social dynamics that perpetuate child labour exploitation. Some have suggested that the main impact of GoodWeave is to shelter an industry, rather than protect its workers (Seidman, 2015). Central to these concerns is the question of legitimacy. By furthering the scope of neoliberal norms in India, GoodWeave risks promoting an economic system which diminishes the rights of workers, disavows the political dimensions of inequality, and relegates the issue of poverty reduction to a secondary consequence of growth-induced development (Banks and Hulme, 2014). Contemporary definitions of development emphasise the right to "transparent, accountable governance in all sectors of society... for the realization of people-centred sustainable development" (UN, 1997). Therefore, such concerns are vitally important to the wider legitimacy of development and global governance, in order to ensure that modern development practices don't merely replicate historical power imbalances associated with colonial normative justifications for intervention. To explore the issue of legitimacy in relation to GoodWeave, the study will begin by surveying the main sources of empirical literature on the subject.

## 2 Literature Review

The most widely cited framework for conceptualising legitimacy, in recent years is Scharpf's Input and Output framework. These two dimensions relate to democratic qualities such as transparency and accountability, as well as effectiveness or practical outputs respectively (Dingwerth, 2007, pp.12-36). Using these basic criteria, the following section will provide an overview of how these criteria have been represented and applied in previous empirical of GoodWeave in India.

Owing to the transnational nature of PTGs, maintaining democratic legitimacy is often considered a traditional area of weakness (Dingwerth, 2017; Scharpf, 1999). These common issues appear to be reflected in the case of GoodWeave India. Most visibly in relation to their institutional structure, and normative purpose. For example, in an empirical field-study Dumas (2017) highlights the negative implications of GoodWeave's inspection and complaint system that functions on an *inquisitorial* rather than *accusatorial* basis. This means that workers, families and producers have no procedural means to lodge a formal complaint with the organisation or production site, but rely on observations made during the highly sporadic visits of GoodWeave's own monitors (Dumas, 2017). Similarly, Koenig-Archibugi and McDonald (2017) classify the relationship between GoodWeave and its intended beneficiaries (workers and families) as one of *separation*, whereby "regulators are completely disconnected from beneficiaries" (Koenig-Archibugi and MacDonald, 2017, p.39). This is supported by the work of a German evaluation team who note that GoodWeave India never attempted to form partnerships with its beneficiaries (Dietz et al. 2003, 60). Furthermore, it is argued that the lack of participatory opportunities for beneficiaries in rule-making and implementation processes supports an assessment of GoodWeave as "democratically illegitimate" (Koenig-Archibugi and Macdonald, 2017, p.45).

Additionally, at a normative level, researchers have conducted interviews with the parents and households of former child labourers in the Indian carpet belt, and have found that whilst parents are widely supportive of the increased enrolment of children in education over work, they often stressed the link between the economic conditions of households and

school attendances (Sharma et al. 2000, 66). Therefore, they tended to oppose the prohibition and monitoring of children's work (Sharma et al. 2000, 67) due to the economic necessity of child labour to support low-income households. Although GoodWeave India provides non-residential primary schooling for the child labourers that it finds, it provides no compensation to families for the loss of income from child work and no alternative income opportunities (Koenig-Archibugi and MacDonald, 2017, p.48). Therefore, their emphasis upon market-regulation fails to address the fundamental normative desires of beneficiaries, which is to ease the economic pressures facing households in the region and provide income to alleviate poverty.

As highlighted by Dingwerth (2017), democratic qualities such as accountability, participation and shared normative objectives are increasingly of secondary importance to the legitimation of authority in the field of private governance. However, the impact and effectiveness of GoodWeave's operations have similarly been widely questioned; firstly, with regards to their abilities to meet their own operational objectives, and secondly, in relation to their social impact upon the wider patterns and discursive norms surrounding the issue of child labour in India. For example, some authors have voiced scepticism concerning whether GoodWeave has the capacity to properly monitor all of its registered looms (Seidman, 2010; Koenig-Archibugi and MacDonald, 2017). As with many non-governmental organisations, GoodWeave India suffers from limited resources and personnel, so to provide regular inspections across such a widely dispersed industry would incur a range of logistical difficulties. Moreover, despite the claims made by GoodWeave's directors, that monitors conduct at least 3 unannounced inspections of each registered loom per year; many authors have questioned the credibility of this claim (Lake and Gourevitch, 2012; Seidman, 2015; Sharma et al; 2002). To merely mention one, Seidman used GoodWeave's own statistics of the number of inspections conducted per week, and the number of looms registered with the programme, to conclude that GoodWeave's claims "represent almost unattainable maximums", and that no loom could possibly be inspected more than once every three years (Seidman, 2010).

GoodWeave's own monitoring method consisting of regular unannounced inspections, has been sharply criticised by Indian child labour activists and trade unionists. Aside from constructing a powerful and emotive image of children being 'rescued', to advertise to western consumers, some have argued that the inspections "amount to little more than spot-checks" (Johns, interview 2003; Khan 1999 in Koenig-Archibugi and Macdonald, 2017). For example, it is argued by Indian activists that the inaccessible nature of many

production sites often gives looms prior warning of inspections, meaning that any children working may have vanished by the time monitors arrive. Moreover, the long-term nature of carpet production means that any child weavers may simply return after the visit (Agnivesh, 2003).

The manner with which inspections are carried out is also often cited as a major fault with the GoodWeave model and consumer-led regulation more broadly. For example, GoodWeave's continual emphasis upon 'rescuing' child labourers coincides well with the emotive nature of child labour to Western consumer audiences. However, researchers working in the carpet belt have continually stated that the practice of unannounced inspections, has led to families of working children to perceive monitoring teams as external forces threatening their livelihoods (Koenig-Archibugi and MacDonald, 2017). For example, a field-based research noted; "the manner in which these inspectors visit a specified loom is more in the manner of a raiding party" (Sharma et al, 2000, 49). This is reinforced by another large-scale survey of households in the region showing that NGOs operating as independent monitors are "not well regarded by the villagers" (Srivastava and Raj 2002, 111). This therefore raises further questions regarding the democratic legitimacy of consumocratic regulatory systems, and whether the actions of PTG initiatives are grounded in the normative objectives of consumers or workers.

Proponents of transnational private governance often cite the targeted nature of development interventions by private actors as a key strength. GoodWeave's social labelling approach appears to directly coincide with this framework, focusing on a single-industry, a single issue, in a single region (Seidman, 2010). However, many child labour activists in India are similarly critical of the wider impact of GoodWeave's market-based approach. Lake and Gourevitch argue that the continual emphasis upon a single issue, driven by a need to gain customers approval has led to social labelling NGOs in India increasingly behave and compete like private firms. Due to competition from other organisations such as Kaleen, and Step and Fair, GoodWeave has prioritised its internal objectives over its social responsibilities (Lake and Gourevitch). Furthermore, some studies have suggested that the saturation of social labelling initiatives in the carpet industry, may have merely shifted child labourers into other non-export and often more hazardous industries such as mining and agriculture (Seidman).

Domestically, many Indian child labour activists have argued that by promoting a separate system of regulation for a selected number of export sectors, GoodWeave may inadvertently reduce external pressure on the Indian government to protect those child labourers operating in sectors producing goods for internal markets, such as agriculture or

informal sectors (Seidman, 2012). Moreover, by providing a “voluntary” alternative to state enforcement of existing child labour legislation, critics have argued that voluntary private governance has undermined the work of domestic civil actors to strengthen labour laws more broadly (Sanghera, 2012; Seidman, 2010; Sharma et al, 2002). From a constructivist perspective, (Sanghera, 2012) further argued that the continual promotion of “market-based” solutions to complex and multi-faceted social issues, risks relegating the issue of child labour to a problem of market failure. In doing so, this fails to grasp the underlying political realities that fuel exploitative practices, centred on economic, religious, geographic and caste divides (Sanghera, 2012).

### 3 Research Puzzle

Overall, as demonstrated in the preliminary literature, the consensus of relevant empirical studies tends to present GoodWeave's legitimization claims as at best questionable. From a democratic perspective, there is an apparent lack of procedural accountability or transparency. However, more fundamentally, Goodweave's ability to meet its stated external objective of 'eradicating child labour in supply chains' appears to be significantly lacking at a practical, operational or conceptual level according to domestic child labour experts. However, despite this resounding consensus within the relevant empirical material, GoodWeave remains one of the most acclaimed and internationally recognised models of sustainable market-oriented governance (Seidman, 2015). This therefore raises profound questions regarding the ways in which legitimacy is traditionally conceptualised in academic scholarship, implying that studies of legitimization require a holistic analysis of the wider discursive processes and norms that form the basis and determine success of actor's legitimization claims.

The following thesis will seek to offer a new perspective on the legitimacy credentials of GoodWeave by incorporating a number of critical insights gathered from broader literature, that have so far not been applied to the phenomenon of transnational private governance initiatives in the field of development and labour regulation. The original framework will draw heavily upon the notion of performative legitimization as outlined by Krahmman (2017), and will include a range of other concepts in critical theory to analyse the discursive and performative dimensions of legitimization processes, its significance in broader structures of material and ideational power, and the practical implications for the dynamics of child labour in India. Thus the research question is as follows:

*How does GoodWeave perform legitimacy through the language and ideas circulated in their public material?*

Specifically, the study will evaluate the legitimization claims of GoodWeave India from a constructivist perspective. Emphasising the *ways* in which Goodweave seeks to demonstrate effectiveness. Therefore unlike the bulk of previous studies in the field of



legitimation, which is based solely around the objective identification of input and output qualities that make an actor legitimate, the primary focus of analysis will be on the discursive processes that construct perceptions of legitimation in the minds of target audiences. The sources of legitimacy will be outlined in the theoretical framework, and the findings will later tie into the consequences of legitimation or lack thereof, in the conclusion. This study will identify key indicators such as repetition to support Krahmman's (2017) framework of performativity, and will explore the specific norms and measures of legitimacy presented in claims. The research will finally build upon previous literature by situating the findings within a wider theoretical discourse through an deductive method of inquiry.

## 4 Theoretical Framework

The following framework will seek to problematise the tendency to conceptualise legitimacy in the myopic sense of quantifiable inputs and outputs, as popularised by Scharpf. The insistence on quantifiable facts being the main determinants of legitimacy fails to adequately capture the subjective nature of the phenomenon, which can only be sufficiently studied ‘in context’ (Beetham, 1991, p.47).

Drawing on the work of Krahnemann (2017) and Cutler (2010), this research will seek to highlight and define the performative dimensions of legitimacy, from a constructivist perspective. The framework will seek to build upon previous research by exploring the nature of legitimacy through the lens of critical theory, drawing on critical understandings of ‘common sense’ and ‘citationality’ in dominant paradigms of what constitutes ‘best practices’ in development. This section will then seek to define this framework in more detail, by discussing the key concepts and theories that will drive the later stage of deductive analysis. The following section will begin with an overview of recent discourses concerning the dominant conceptual models of legitimacy in relation to private governance, and motivate the construction of a more suitable framework. In doing so, the study will draw upon these insights to form a more holistic framework with which to assess GoodWeave India’s legitimisation claims.

### 4.1 Orthodox Understandings of Legitimacy

#### 4.1.1 Conceptualizing Legitimacy Beyond Borders

The growth of market-oriented governance strategies in national and international policy-making presents a series of theoretical and empirical challenges to traditional Weberian conceptions of democratic legitimacy through public consent (Hall and Biersteker, 2002). These challenges arise in part from the inability for transnational modes of governance to

draw democratic consent from disparate national populaces with varying common interests (Scharpf, 1999). This has led many scholars to begin to conceptualise legitimacy in terms of two distinct components of quantifiable inputs and outputs. Therefore, according to Scharpf and other proponents of Input/Output models of legitimacy, performance and *effectiveness* are considered the most crucial sources of legitimacy against which PTGs should be evaluated (Dingwerth, 2017; Scharpf, 1999).

Proponents of output based models of legitimation argue that the majority of early PTG initiatives operated chiefly in governance gaps, targeting development issues in which there is already an abundance of international legislation, that states were merely failing to uphold (Dingwerth, 2017). Therefore, proponents of PTG argue that transnational market actors conduct development interventions as market *experts* seeking to merely operationalize the normative aims of the international community (idib) (Cutler, 2010). Accordingly, as previously stated *effectiveness* is considered the most crucial source of legitimacy against which PTGs should be evaluated (Dingwerth, 2017). Many of the most commonly cited indicators of performance used by PTG are grounded in a market-oriented logic of private sector *expertise* (Cutler, 2010). Consequently, there has been an increasing emphasis upon market-oriented objectives such as internal growth, market share, participation rates, increasing private partnerships and other quantifiable measurements of performance (Cutler, 2010; Krahmman, 2017; Lewis, 2015; Lake and Gourevitch).

#### 4.1.2 The Relegation of Democratic Narratives

However, more recent critical studies have suggested that the increasing dominance of this conceptual model has presented governance actors with a false dichotomy either emphasising democratic qualities or conveying effectiveness (Cutler, 2010). Such trends have contributed to a selective emphasis upon performance-based legitimation claims by governance actors, which in the long run threatens to undermine the democratic legitimacy of the broader development agenda (Krahmman, 2017; Bexell, 2014). For example, recent empirical studies show that there has been a declining emphasis upon democratic legitimation qualities such as accountability, transparency, discursive openness and inclusiveness, in favour of demonstrating effectiveness through performance indicators, as the field of private governance has become more saturated (Dingwerth, 2017).

From the perspective of critical theory, other critics have voiced concerns regarding the wider ideational impact of the continual reliance upon input and output models of legitimacy with which to judge the legitimacy of market actors to govern key social issues. Such perspectives argue that the increasing scope of market-based policies and performance measurements in development practice, serves to normalize the logic of Neoliberal modes of governance; Defined in this literature as a political agenda of privatization, economic deregulation and the retreat of state influence over the public and private spheres, grounded in an ideological assumption that markets can effectively ‘self-regulate’. Some authors argue that this ideational and institutional transformation in development governance has led to a ‘hollowing out’ of global and local civil society, and suppressed the democratic expression of civil discourse that may question dominant conceptions of development or challenge the ideological underpinnings of hegemony (Banks and Hulme, 2014) (Gregoratti, 2010).

## 4.2 ‘From Performance to Performativity’

Recent literature has similarly questioned whether notions of ‘performance’, that are commonly found in the private sector, can be applied to complex and multi-faceted social objectives such as the eradication of child labour (Lewis, 2015). For example, in a study of the legitimization claims of private governance actors operating in the fields of health and security, Krahmman (2017) highlights how performance is increasingly replaced with ‘performativity’. Whereby private governance organisations merely cite the implementation of “practices associated with effectiveness” rather than any meaningful or reliable indicators of performance. As business-oriented principles of management have become embedded, in a similar manner to how private sector actors quantify their success in terms of growth and market share, organisations delivering social good have similarly begun to repeat this legitimization practice. However, the immaterial and socially constructed nature of social good is arguably impossible to quantify, thus leading to an increasing tendency to merely cite “practices associated with effectiveness” rather than reliable indicators of social outcome (idib). Furthermore, Lake and Gourevitch (2012) argue that the need to emphasise performance indicators to be considered as legitimate actors, has led PTG initiatives to prioritise short-term internal objectives over broader normative social aims, resulting in

NGOs and PTGs operating as private sector firms competing for growth and market-share (Lake and Gourevitch, 2012). Therefore, the replacement of performance with performativity is largely the result of the increasing ideological dominance of market-oriented logic within the social sector, and the “privatisation of governance” (Lewis, 2015). More broadly, other scholars adopt the lens of critical theory to question the legitimisation of PTG organisations through the narrativisation of performance indicators. For instance, Cutler (2010) argues that it is symptomatic of deeper conditions and systems of knowledge that propagate the “reproduction of transnational capitalism”, through mimicking the behaviour of business actors, thus equating social outcomes with business performance.

### 4.3 Constructing an Analytical Framework

As demonstrated in the prior literature review, the traditional conceptual model of legitimacy as being defined by ‘input’ and ‘output’ sources constitutes a limited and arguably myopic means of assessing legitimacy. This following framework will seek to build on recent critical studies, to develop a conceptual understanding of legitimacy as a set of normative processes that are discursively performed. Moreover, recent developments of private governance in the alternative fields of health and security constitutes a promising new direction of inquiry, that as of yet has not been applied to the field of social governance. Drawing on the insights of Krahmhann (2017) and Cutler (2015) in particular, this research will seek to develop an analytical framework to explore the performative dimensions of legitimacy, from a constructivist perspective. The following framework will seek to build upon previous literature on performativity by employing a deeper lens of critical theory in order to theoretically relate these findings to the wider practical context of child labour in India.

#### 4.3.1 Legitimacy

The study will employ a multi-dimensional understanding of legitimacy, that seeks to expand upon the overarching distinction between input and output forms of legitimacy provided by Scharpf (1999). The following framework is inspired by the work of Hurrell (2005), however it has been adapted to incorporate an understanding of all three aspects of legitimacy as subjective, non-quantifiable qualities that are reproduced in a discourse. Broadly speaking, the

framework outlines *procedural*, *substantive* and *expert-based* sources of legitimacy as the primary components. *Procedural* legitimacy is used to assess the degree to which a policy or institution acts in accordance with widely accepted principles of norm-based or legal processes. This consideration was previously touched upon in the literature review to establish an empirical basis of legitimacy, however it is not referred to explicitly in the aims of this research and will only be mentioned in relation to the studies outlined in the literature review. *Substantive* legitimacy refers to the moral and normative basis for authority, and is predicated on the belief that rules and regulations are created in accordance with the values and desires of beneficiaries. *Expertise or Expert-based* sources of legitimacy describe the perception in the minds of legitimation targets that relevant authorities hold the capacity or sufficient level of expertise to meaningfully deliver and enforce the policies, rules or social changes that are promised. This component is the most crucial to the legitimation of private governance initiatives, and will be the primary focus of this study.

Although broadly reminiscent of Scharpf's much cited definitions of Input, throughput and Output legitimacy, this framework differs and expands upon traditional conceptions in a number of key ways. Firstly, the framework was conceptualised in relation to top-down structures of legitimation, which is highly relevant to the case of assessing transnational private-led regulatory organisations and Goodweave in particular. Secondly, the inclusion of shared norms and values as a basis for legitimacy is of particular relevance to organisations, which operate amidst the varying normative landscape of disparate societies that form global supply chains. Furthermore, the issue of child labour itself is highly prone to critique from a perspective of moral relativism (Nieuwenhuys, 2007) and this will be a key consideration in the study. Therefore, for development practices to truly be considered as 'emboldening the individual to demand their own rights', the policies, practices and outcomes of a transnational regulatory organisation must have a firm grounding in the normative values and desires of those governed. Thirdly, the use of '*expert-based*' legitimacy rather than the widely cited quality of *effectiveness or output* legitimacy, underlines the inter-subjective nature of legitimacy claims that will form the basis of this research. For example, understandings of *effectiveness* and *output-based* legitimacy imply a focus on observable *outcomes*, which in this study have already been established in prior literature, and have been shown to be difficult to measure. The focus upon *expert-based* legitimacy instead incorporates a focus upon the discursive *processes* of legitimation, and the ways in which expertise can be subjectively conveyed to beneficiaries and target audiences. Overall, this framework is more suited to the constructivist epistemological disposition of the research.

### 4.3.2 Performativity

The concept of performativity is widely used across a broad range of theoretical and epistemological research strands. Generally, the term is used to describe language and actions that are not merely descriptive but function as a form of social action. The social action under evaluation will be the legitimization of GoodWeave through intersubjective constructions of *expertise* by means of the citation of discursive norms associated with dominant paradigms of governance. The term was popularised by Judith Butler's work on the discursive construction of gender identity, in which performativity was defined as "that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler, 1993). Krahmman (2017) subsequently adapted this understanding to describe the legitimization of private governance actors, through "**the repetition of practices and norms merely associated with effectiveness**" (Krahmann, 2017) rather than any meaningful or objective indications of performance. In this sense, Krahmman's definition overlaps with Butler's in that it encompasses a repeated iteration of particular discursive norms that produce a construction of legitimate authority. Repetition is a vital aspect of performativity and will form a key indicator and specific focus during the empirical analysis of GoodWeave's legitimization claims. Citationality is similarly a crucial aspect of performativity (Derrida, 1971), whereby actors draw upon and repeat particular discursive norms, in order to legitimate their actions and positions. From the perspective of critical theory, the repetition of norms similarly serves to normalise political narratives as 'common sense' and thus consolidate ideational structures that support hegemony, and 'manufacture consent' for dominant paradigms and material structures of power. Due to the increasing dominance of Neoliberal governance principles, expertise is commonly stated synonymously with the reiteration of market-oriented principles of governance (Cutler, 2010).

# 5 Methodology

The following section will seek to outline the research design, sampling choices, and means of analysis. It will attempt to briefly summarize the choice of research design, and will give a detailed description of the way in which the aforementioned deductive framework will be used to draw original empirical insights. The section will then detail the specific documents that will be analysed and motivate these choices through an outlined criteria. Finally, the methodological limitations and potential issues will be acknowledged in order to then formulate a means of minimizing the impact of these issues on the quality of study.

## 5.1 Research Design

The research will take the form of a qualitative content analysis, to facilitate a greater degree of attention towards the performative dimensions of legitimacy, and the discursive construction of *perceptions* of expertise that result. Qualitative content analysis will consist of a systematic method of searching out and describing both manifest and latent meaning within the legitimation claims articulated in the selected texts (Kohlbacher, 2005). Relevant information will be coded according to the form of legitimation outlined in the theoretical framework, and subsequent themes or types of legitimation claims will then be extracted, and presented through a descriptive narrative. The research will then situate the findings within the broader critical framework, in order to maintain the descriptive strengths and reliability of the research, whilst applying a deeper critical focus (Drisko and Marchi, 2015, p.92). The initial descriptive emphasis is an essential stage of the deductive design, as it will enhance the confirmability of the research, and minimize the presentation of data that has been distortedly interpreted by the researcher (Drisko, 1997).

The qualitative emphasis reflects the broader constructivist epistemological stance of the research, which views social phenomena such as legitimation, as being shaped by social interaction and discursive practices, that are both culturally relative and context-



dependent (Drisko, 2013a). Moreover the inter-subjective nature of legitimacy coincides well with the broader constructivist epistemological grounding of the study. For example, according to Beetham, legitimation can only be empirically studied ‘in context’ (Beetham, 1991, p.90). Therefore, the research design will take the form of a single-case study, to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the performative dimensions of legitimation in a specific context. Although the empirical insights will only be applicable to GoodWeave India, it is hoped that the demonstrated utility of incorporating a performative dimension into legitimation-seeking practices will be of significance to the broader field. Furthermore, by drawing on the frameworks outlined by Krahmman (2017) and Cutler (2010) in regards to the field of security and health governance, this study will build on wider research by applying the key insights gathered to an exemplary case study in the field of child labour governance. Despite focusing on legitimation ‘in context’ of GoodWeave, the chosen case is considered as *illustrative* of the broader field for a number of reasons. Firstly, GoodWeave is one of the most internationally acclaimed, successful and organisationally developed examples of consumer-led private governance, and so will be more representative of wider norms in the field. Secondly, GoodWeave’s governance model and certification strategy has been used as the blue-print for numerous other private governance initiatives in the field of child labour, such as GAP’s 2007 monitoring mechanism, and Kaleen (Seidman, 2010). Therefore, the empirical findings will be particularly relevant to prevailing dynamics in the field of private governance and child labour in India.

## 5.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The study will use the framework outlined by Bexell (2014) which states that legitimation claims are best observed by analysing the ‘websites, annual reports, formal decisions and public statements’ of relevant organisations (Bexell, 2014; Steffek, 2009; Hurrelmann et al, 2007). However, the study will employ a purposeful sampling method, in order to choose a holistic set of documents that are the most relevant and rich sources of data (Patton, 2002). These documents will be evaluated beforehand using J.Scott’s (1990) four key criteria of:

1. *Authenticity* - Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
2. *Credibility* - Is the evidence free from error and distortion?
3. *Representativeness* - Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known?
4. *Meaning* - Is the evidence clear and comprehensible?"

The study will analyse a holistic set of sources consisting of virtual and official documents, and formal presentations given on mass media platforms. Specifically the chosen resources are:

- The GoodWeave India website 2019
- GoodWeave 2017 Annual Report
- Monitoring and Evaluation Summary Report, 2016
- TEDxDhaka Session 3 talk given by GoodWeave CEO Nina Smith, titled *'Fighting Child Slavery with Innovation'*, 2014

[Accessed 13/08/2019]

This set of documents is holistic in that it targets a range of different *audiences* of legitimation, consisting of business partners, consumers, the wider public and child labour civil actors and advocacy groups respectively. This minimizes potential limitations, as certain norms or specific forms of legitimation claims may be overemphasized, and thus distorted, when addressing specific audiences. For example, the specific language and discursive norms used when addressing business partners such as exporters or producers may be different from the sort used when addressing consumers or civil advocacy groups. The documents have all been published within the last 5 years, and therefore will be more representative of the contemporary actions of the organization. Furthermore, as GoodWeave received a peak of scholarly attention from the mid-late 2000s onwards, this will distinguish the study from the bulk of previous research.

The first three documents are publicly available on GoodWeave's own registered online platforms, and were made and published by the organization. Therefore they can be assumed to be both *authentic* in their origin, *representative* of the actions and beliefs of the organization and *credible* due to being free from external distortion. The only exception to this is the TEDx talk, which, although being referenced on GoodWeave's own online platforms was published on an external media platform. However, the talk is available in the

form of an 18:17 minute video format, free of any cuts or editing, thus mitigating any obvious issues relating to credibility. Similarly, the speech was delivered by the CEO of the organization and is explicitly promoted in GoodWeave's own online platform, thus enhancing the *representativeness* and *authenticity* of the material. Written and verified transcripts are available and therefore issues related to discerning the *meaning* will not be a foreseeable issue.

### 5.3 Analysis

The analysis will begin with iterative readings of the data, in order to determine a “sense of the whole” (Patton, 2002). The data reduction strategy will then be carried out through a process of thematic extraction, whereby the relevant sections of text related to legitimation claims will be highlighted, identified and retrieved (Bryman, 2004, p557). This information will then be categorized into the respective dimension of legitimacy that it relates to, i.e. *expertise*, *procedural* or *substantive* legitimacy (Hurrell, 2005). The data will then be presented in a narrative format, with the descriptive meaning firstly being established, and followed by an interrogation of the expanded meaning of the information, using the lens of critical theory, as laid out in the theoretical framework to guide the interpretation of the results (Sandelowski, 2000). The complex and interpretive nature of critical theory may mean that the interpretation of themes may alter between researchers, thus undermining the validity of the codes (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.80). However, the descriptive basis of the presentation will maintain the validity and confirmability of the results. Furthermore, in accordance with the broader framework of performative legitimation, and to minimise the risk of ‘wilful bias’ (Hardy and Bryman, 2004, 7) the repetition of themes will be considered, in order to reflect the repetitive and citational nature of performative utterance (Derrida, 1971). The emphasis upon repetition has also been included in order to minimize the chance of the study ignoring disconfirming data that may not coincide with the laid out theoretical framework (Drisko and Maschi, 2015, p.96). Analysis of the ‘formal aspects’ of the content, as well as overt content will also be included. This refers to the consideration of the context, format and delivery of the information within the specific document, as well as a consideration of its desired audience (Schreier, 2012).

### 5.3.1 Limitations

As with most deductive forms of research, the main limitation or issue associated with this framework is the potential for ‘wilful bias’ to distort the findings of the analysis (Hardy and Bryman, 2004, 7). Having a predetermined theoretical framework may therefore mean that certain themes or patterns appear more obvious or apparent during the analysis, at the expense of new findings that may not fully coincide with the expected results. However, the research will attempt to minimize this risk by focusing on the repetition of particular norms or ideas as a key indicator of a theme. This also coincides with the concept of performativity employed in this research, and will prevent the study from overlooking potentially inconvenient findings.

A common critique of qualitative content analysis when applied to organizational documents is the reduced ability to derive meaning due to the researcher’s limited understanding of the internal environment, because of the non-invasive nature of the study. However, the specific aims of this study will offset this methodological fault somewhat, as the research specifically intends to analyse how perceptions of legitimacy are constructed ‘in the minds’ of wider audiences (Beetham, p.43, 1991) through performative discourse and actions. Consequently, the study will specifically analyse the ‘documentary reality’ (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011) as a focus in itself, rather than seeking to uncover the reality alluded to in the documentation. Therefore, use of publicly available information is central to analysing the ways in which legitimacy is performed, owing to the inter-subjective nature of the phenomenon.

# 6 Analysis

The following section will present the findings of the analysis. Recurring themes were identified and drawn from the documents, and then coded depending on which dimension of legitimacy they directly corresponded to. Each sub-section represents a key theme and will be laid out through a descriptive narrative, in which both the latent and manifest meaning of the content will be evaluated in accordance with the deductive theoretical framework.

## 6.1 Expert-led Legitimation

### 6.1.1 Market-Driven Processes of Social Change

One of the most commonly repeated themes throughout the material is the assumed deterministic causal link between the embrace of market-forces and the emancipation of the individual. GoodWeave repeatedly states, “by creating a market demand...human-rights will be essential and intrinsic” (M&E report, 2016). It further repeatedly compares markets to a naturalistic force, stating that “harnessing the power of business...combines the power of business and consumers to ignite the engine of social change” (GWI Website, 2019). The persistent use of this language is grounded in a euro-centric theory of modernisation, whereby economic growth through high mass-consumption is posited as an essential pre-condition to social development and the granting of emancipatory rights (See Lipset, 1959; Rostow, 1960). The use of the term “harness” is a clear example of the way in which GoodWeave attempts to naturalise this logic, by comparing market forces to natural forces such as wind or animal power that can be ‘harnessed’. Similarly, “igniting the engine of social change” is a direct reference to the perceived necessity of industrial progress to act as a catalyst in social development. This theory of social change is also illustrated as a natural and inevitable cycle,

as summarised by the repeated claim - “when companies sign up with GoodWeave, they can see the future” (TEDx, 9:45, 2014).

GoodWeave invokes the theoretical business-oriented notion of the virtuous circle to describe this process stating, “Human rights will then lead to stable markets, better products and customer loyalty” (TEDx, 9:59, 2014). The language of human rights is regularly referenced in conjunction with economic growth, and the two concepts are presented as inseparable. Such theories of social change are reiterations of the fundamental logic of Neoliberalism. Therefore, this is a clear example of how the norms of dominant market-oriented governance paradigms are reiterated to cultivate an assumption of effectiveness in the minds of audiences, rather than the demonstration of objective or reliable indications of performance.

### 6.1.2 Quantification of Social Good

As outlined by Krahnemann, the immaterial and culturally relativist nature of social good constitutes a major obstacle for private actors seeking to provide reliable performance indicators (2017). In a consistent manner, GoodWeave asserts that as “the link between market development and social change is difficult to quantify....GoodWeave maximises resources by focusing on output and outcomes” (M&E report, 2016). The most commonly cited code relating to performance, is the growth of the organisation expressed in terms of numerical and percentage increases of market share, brand recognition and the total number of children ‘rescued’. With the latter presented as being directly correlational and consequential to the former. For example, the Monitoring and Evaluation Report states “the targets to measure success are expressed in terms of increases over previous years” (M&E report, 2016).

Quantitative growth statistics are invariably offered as the key indicators for this ‘success’. For example, commonly repeated claims are that “the number of consumers reached through the advertising campaign increased by 36%”, there was “an increase in import value” to North American and European markets, and also a “3.4 increase in market share” for GoodWeave labelled rugs (Annual Report, 2017). Furthermore, throughout the material it is stated that the “unique” mechanism is helping more than “350 brands” gain transparency by being monitored by “70 experts” (GW Website, 2019). The latent meaning behind these claims can be regarded as an attempt to cultivate a perception that is common to

business-oriented actors - that the business is *growing*. The growth of the organisation is inferred to then contribute to a directly correlational numerical increase in the annual number of looms being monitored, the numerical reduction of child labourers in rural communities, and the numerical enrolment of children in education. However, this link is not fully established with reliable indications of a causal links, but merely reiterated, citing a common ideologically driven link grounded in Neoliberal logic. Therefore, GoodWeave proposes a model of competency based around a quantification of social outcomes directly corresponding to the reaches of the organisation.

### 6.1.3 Expertise

Another key theme that emerged in claims relating to effectiveness is the use of so-called “experts” to implement and monitor the GoodWeave system. For example, it is repeatedly claimed that the “70 expert inspectors” (Annual Report, 2017) are “specially-trained” (TEDx, 6:37, 2014), and that the quality of the procedures are maintained through “collaboration with external partners and experts” (M&E report, 2016). However, the specific qualifications offered or details of this expertise remain unclear. The use of ‘experts’ within the GoodWeave system is said to be one of the key drivers of the organisations’ effectiveness (M&E report, 2016), by providing annual “inputs” from “strategic findings”. Furthermore, the diffusion of ‘expertise’ to local partners is similarly stated as an important aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of the system, and accelerating social transformation. For example, individuals in local communities are endowed with expertise to operate as “change-agents” (Annual Report, 2017). However, the latent meaning behind this recurring theme is the implied association between ‘expert innovation’ and market-systems that “can elevate the world” (TEDx, 4:45, 2014), emphasising the role of market-actors in fuelling social development, to present GoodWeave’s “Market-Driven system” as effective in delivering social outcomes. However, it must be similarly emphasised that no justification of qualification of the term ‘expertise’ is offered throughout the covered materials.

## 6.2 Substantive Legitimation

## 6.2.1 Implementation of Pre-Existing Legislation

In keeping with the findings of Dingwerth (2017), the primary recurring theme with regards to the code of ‘Substantive legitimation’ is the alignment of GoodWeave’s actions with the wider normative aims and policies of international institutions and pre-existing legislation. For example, the policies and work of international bodies such as the ILO and UNICEF are regularly quoted throughout all documents. Furthermore, GoodWeave continuously emphasises its partnership with recognised national authorities such as the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance (ISEAL) the ‘US Department of Labour’, ‘US AID’ and the ‘UK Home Office’ (Annual Report, 2017). In doing so, GoodWeave attempts to convey its substantive legitimacy by cooperating with recognised norms and actors in the global system. Whilst this is largely directed at international actors and western consumers, GoodWeave also consistently references the local legislative landscape in the countries in which they operate. For example, they seek to “leverage India’s 2009 right to education act” (Annual Report, 2017) in order to enrol children in schools. In doing so, they are complying and implementing shared beliefs and norms that have been codified through a democratic process. However, following on from section 6.3.1, GoodWeave, this normative grounding in wider shared norms is consistently presented as resulting from market forces, stating, “Consumer demand facilitates emancipation” (TEDx, 9:45, 2014).

## 6.2.2 Human Rights as an Engine for Modernity

The most repeated substantive legitimation claim that emerges throughout the material is the extension of individual rights for children. For example, the notion of childhood is repeatedly referenced as an inalienable right and the basis of individual identity. One of the core stated aims is bring about “a day when the right to childhood is guaranteed” (M&E report, 2017). There is a consistent reference to the “invisibility” of children who “have been denied a voice” (TEDx, 2:27, 2014). Similarly working children are also pictured as only partially visible, peering through a small crack in a wall (Annual Report, 2017). Thus referencing the denial of individual identity that follows infringements of human rights. One way in which GoodWeave demonstrates this normative commitment is the articulation of the “stories” of



individual children, seeking to provide an identity to children who would otherwise be a mere unit or statistic.

Providing access to education is a recurring theme in legitimisation claims addressing substantive legitimacy. The granting of educational rights is framed as a means of ‘empowering’ children to become independent urban individuals. One of the clearest examples of this is the story of ‘Samrul’, whose school enrolment is presented as the catalyst in his emancipation from the traditional family structure in rural India, in which he was forced to take care of his siblings whilst his “illiterate parents” were working (Annual Report, 2017). Another key image that feeds into this theme is visible on the opening page of the Annual Report, whereby the CEO of GoodWeave is sitting with ‘rescued’ schoolchildren and allowing them to hold a new mobile phone (Annual Report, 2017). Echoing critical theoretical analysis of Krishna (2015), this image is seemingly addressed to western consumers to provide a normative justification for the organisations’ work, by implicitly associating consumer goods with emancipation and modernity. Similarly, following on from section 6.1.1, this further feeds into a euro-centric theory of education and increased income, as the key drivers of liberal modernity.

However, the recurring theme of ‘childhood’ is also one of the clearest indications that the desired audience of legitimisation is Western consumers. Many authors have underlined the Euro-centricity and socially constructed nature of the very notion of ‘childhood’ (Nieuwenhuys, 2007). Furthermore, in the selected materials, the extension of individual identity through human rights is often presented as inherently tied to modernity and Occidentalism. For example, a three-minute long video during the TED Talk seeks to document the life of ‘Sanju’, an individual child labourer (11:00 – 13:45). In the opening 1 minute of the story, Sanju is taken from her traditional home and forced to work as a bonded labourer. During this segment, there is distinctively ‘oriental’ music playing in the background (11:02-), using traditional South Asian instruments. However, when Sanju is discovered by inspectors and brought to a GoodWeave school, the music immediately changes to a more modern Western style, symbolising the ‘modernising’ influence of granting educational rights to children. Similarly, during the narrativisation of Sanju’s story, she makes a number of remarks directly addressing Western consumers. Notably, “At this stage in the story, a hero entered the picture, it was you! Your buying power can end child labour” (TEDx, 12:49, 2014). The latent meaning behind this statement is that the consumer is directly responsible for the extension of rights to marginalised individuals, through increased

consumption of luxury goods. Finally, the speaker then finishes by remarking, “may it be at our command that they gain their freedom” (TEDx, 18:10, 2014).

## 7 Conclusion and Discussion

This study set out to evaluate the phenomenon of performative legitimation. As previous research suggested, the analysis revealed a tendency for legitimation claims to be articulated on the basis of their ideological association with foundational assumptions of Neoliberal governance. Consequently, despite a consistent emphasis upon quantifiable performance figures related to the internal growth of the organisation, the true scale of the social outcome following GoodWeave's actions was not reliably detailed, least of all from the perspective of its beneficiaries. The underlying logic of the most commonly recurring legitimation claims can be reduced to two principle political assumptions. Firstly, that the embrace of market-forces is both indicative of expertise and inherently conducive to social emancipation (see Hayek, 1944). Secondly, the extension of individual rights and education is both dependent upon growth, and is the first step in a naturally fulfilling process of modernisation (see Rostow, 1960). Both of these notions are highly Euro-centric and inherently grounded in the logic of Neoliberalism.

In order to support this conclusion, I will briefly discuss the key thematic findings from the materials in light of the broader critical literature. The recurring themes derived from the literature all feed into key tenets of this paradigm, which through processes of reiteration are supported and 'naturalised' as 'common sense'. Firstly, the positing of market-forces as essential forces of social change is not asserted on the basis of any empirical evidence, but merely continuously reiterated through phrases such as "market-driven solutions can elevate the world" (TEDx, 2014, 9:45). Secondly, the representation of performance as determined by internal growth, increasing market-share, and quantifiable social goods supports the work of Krahmman (2017), who argues that the business-oriented logic of Neoliberal governance, is merely imposed onto social governance, without being able to accurately reflect the true scale of social outcome (Lewis, 2015). Thirdly, as summarised by Cutler (2010) the unquestioning deference to 'experts' is both endemic in contemporary PTG initiatives, unreliable and "implicitly tied to the interests of late capitalism". Furthermore, the legitimation of GoodWeave's increased positioning of themselves as targeted incisive market oriented development experts, is dependent upon the procedural and

substantive legitimacy offered to them by the broader umbrella of globalising institutions (Dingwerth, 2017). Finally, the normative grounding of the organisations' aims in the wider discourse of Human Rights is a strong source of legitimacy, both in the minds of Western audiences, and audiences in the developing world. However, even within this area, GoodWeave continually asserts these values as inherently linked with a growth-based theory of modernisation. As evidenced by the statement that educational rights "will lead to stable markets, better products and customer loyalty" (TEDx, 9:59, 2014). According to Krishna (2015), this merely echoes a key Neoliberal assumption, that the educated middle classes are the "carriers of democracy" and "arbiters of modernity", resulting in an age of "high mass consumption" (Rostow, 1960).

Whilst this is not intended as a polemic, and GoodWeave has undoubtedly provided social benefits to many child labourers in rural India, the findings of this study indicate a worrying dynamic regarding the legitimacy of consumocratic governance. The logic of Neoliberalism is so deeply naturalised that it is implicitly associated with both substantive and expert-led dimensions of legitimacy. Consequently, governance actors can merely performatively construct perceptions of legitimacy in the minds of audiences, through the continued citation and reiteration of embedded cognitive norms. The deeper implications of these findings are twofold. Firstly, the complete lack of autonomy granted to beneficiaries under systems of consumocratic regulation is a worrying outcome, both for the democratic legitimacy of global governance, and the broader legitimacy of development altogether. This issue is exemplified by the statement "May it be at our command that they gain their freedom" (TEDx, 18:10, 2014). The implied relationship between western consumers, PTG initiatives and their beneficiaries within this statement is reminiscent of historical power imbalances that continue to undermine the legitimacy of development actions in many areas of the world today. Secondly, in relation to the contextualised dynamics of child labour in India, the findings are also worrying. The continued reiteration and normalisation of market-oriented governance norms will serve to firstly cement undemocratic systems of governance, and most crucially normalise the logic of Neoliberal forms of governance, which according to the consensus of authors, have been instrumental in the exacerbation of patterns of child labour in India in recent decades (Craig, 2010, p.47; Sanghera, 2012 p.50; Bales, 2004,p.4; Van Den Anker, 2004, p.10).

## 7.1 Directions for Future Research

It is hoped that this study successfully underlines the utility of incorporating a performative dimension into contemporary frameworks for understanding legitimacy. The clear limitations of the study relate to its sole focus upon a single case study. Given further resources and scope it would be useful to analyse the claims and discursive processes articulated by a range of actors in the broader field. In order to fully appreciate the ideational patterns at play in India more broadly, it would be beneficial to conduct a more holistic survey of a greater range of documents, directed towards a variety of audiences. Furthermore, the immaterial and unquantifiable nature of social good makes the notion of performative legitimation particularly relevant to PTG initiatives focused upon the governance of social issues. A potentially promising area of future research would be to conduct a similar analysis of PTG initiatives focused towards environmental issues, in which performance measures may be easier to quantify and assert.

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