Humanitarianism on social media: Rethinking post-humanitarianism in the context of social media logic

Master Thesis

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Abstract

In this master thesis project, I attempt to explore the potential of social media in humanitarian communication. One of the major contributions in recent humanitarian communication studies is Chouliaraki’s theorization of post-humanitarianism, which is technologization of action and de-emotionalization of the causes. However, no studies have taken logic of social media into consideration yet. Therefore, I decided to take social media logic, which are programmability, connectivity and popularity, as one of the theoretical frameworks to explore how it influences dynamics of humanitarian communication. At the same time, I aspire to investigate whether the humanitarian communication on social media fulfill any characteristics of post-humanitarianism. Through conducting in-depth interviews with campaign organizer, campaign participant (volunteer) and random social media users, the result shows that the logic of social media has certain impact on the outcome of humanitarian campaigns, for instance, programmability enables them to actively create their own content, especially they are able to post direct contents from the field, which could potentially build trust between audience and humanitarian practitioners. However, the study also shows that humanitarian communication on social media does show some characteristics of post-humanitarianism, such as compassion fatigue, because the large public seem to be reluctant to act due to the proliferation of similar humanitarian appeals. However, connectivity could change their view if their significant others share, like or comment on a campaign. The audience understand why they engage in the activity and the mission of the humanitarian causes. And also, they constantly participate in the projects. However, this is made by a smaller group of participants, and the large public still remain at the stage of only liking, sharing and so on. Unfortunately, they are not necessarily taking further actions. But still, evidence shows that at least it could raise awareness which is a necessary element for further actions.

Key words: humanitarianism, social media, post-humanitarianism, logic of social media, potential
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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and motivation for the study

*Lördag med Likes* (*Saturday with Likes*) is a series of commercial video presented by UNICEF Sweden to call for a donation to vaccinate and to protect children from deadly diseases. In one of the series, Henrik Schyffert who is a famous Swedish comedian goes to a restaurant with a well-known Swedish singer Yohio. However, it is hilarious enough that when they finish eating, Schyffert tries to pay the meal with Facebook “Likes”, while Yohio undoubtedly pays with bank card. This makes waitress so confused that he can’t help questioning how Likes can be equivalent to money and buy such a delicious and satisfied meal (Unicef Sverige 2014). Then the video ends up with a slogan saying “Vaccines cannot be purchased with Likes. You can support us and save children’s lives by donating money to us” (UNICEF Sverige 2014).

This is not just a commercial with full of sense of humor. Instead, the message and the irony behind the scene inspired me to question and think about the role of social media in humanitarian campaigns. Recent humanitarian communication is described as post-humanitarianism by Lillie Choulia raki in 2010, when she illustrates it as “technolization of action” and “de-emotionalization of the cause” (Chouliaraki 2010, 117). Technologization of action basically refers to that the emergence of new technologies simplify the action we take for humanitarianism (ibid), for example by clicking on Likes, sharing posts, or signing on online petition. However, according to Chouliaraki (2010) it accelerates the speed that we act, without knowing the background and motivation for an appeal, which she refers to as de-emotionalization of the cause.

These considerations could not be apart from the special historical context that we are living right now. The increasing rate of internet penetration enables various online activities, ranging from obtaining news or any kind of information to actively participating in the discussion, such as liking, sharing or commenting, even creating
their own content. By January 2016, the internet penetration is 3.42 billion, which constitutes 46% of 7.40 billion of the global population (We are social 2016). Among those 2.31 billion are the active social media users (We are Social 2016). Just like Van Dijck and Poell (2013, 5) state “The quick rise of social media platforms in the first decade of this century was part of a more general networked culture where information and communication got increasingly defined by the affordance of web technologies such as browsers and search engines.” Different affordance of web technologies render audiences not only the consumers of information on social media platforms, but also producers of the content which is being circulated.

In the light of this transformation, humanitarian organizations also join the big group by utilizing social media in their appeals and campaigns, and make the new form as an indispensable part of their communication. Campaigners start to actively creating petitions, sharing online campaign, calling for donation, so and so forth. In turn, it seems like the public also reacts to this phenomenon, for instance by actively sharing the message, for instance KONY 2012, which is a viral video posted by Invisible Children on YouTube to fight against war criminal Joseph Kony in Uganda. This video gained millions of shares in the first few weeks since it is posted 2012. Some are also joining the discussion on the digital platforms while others liking the pages.

In contrast, in traditional mass media humanitarianism get affected by power relations, namely, the representation of distance suffering might not be separated from political, economic, cultural and the organizational interest (Orgad and Sue 2014, 16). However, it is different nowadays when social media provides opportunities for two-way communication and skips the traditional gate keepers. Nevertheless, can we treat online participants as an active and meaningful dedication for humanitarianism or is it just a representation of compassion fatigue? The small button of “Like” or “Share” may be a good way of expressing sympathy for distance suffering, but are they really helping to change the situation? Or should we describe it as what Chouliaraki called post-humanitarianism which was “technologization of action” and “the de-emotionalization of the cause” (Chouliaraki 2010, 117)?
I think it is possible to say that online humanitarianism is also reflecting the post-humanitarian style of communication, but yet it still needs to be investigated, since Chouliaraki’s theorization of post-humanitarianism is not necessarily based on empirical evidence from social media studies. Therefore, in this thesis work, I choose to open up a discussion on humanitarianism on social media in particular, and at the same time to rethink whether it reflects the post-humanitarian style of communication. Maybe it is too early to describe social media platforms as ‘user-friendly’ before I’ve seen any impact and advantages these platforms bring to the society, for humanitarian aids in this case, no matter they are big or small.

Another motivation behind this topic is that the proliferation of social media usage is not simply an occasional phenomenon, but beyond the existence of social media it is a particular media logic, which potentially navigates public to perform or act in a certain way, for instance by sharing, commenting, creating or programming their own content (Van Dijck and Poell 2013). In such a circumstance, online humanitarian campaigns also situate themselves in this special context. Then, I think it will be crucial to ask how social media logic affects the humanitarian communication and whether these affordances create any opportunities for campaigners and the online public to meet the expectation of the humanitarian campaigns. These thoughts bring me an enthusiasm to start a discussion on the genuine role and potentiality of social media in humanitarianism.

1.2. Research aim and questions

Both critics and praises have been given to social media concerning their role and the outcome they bring to our everyday life. For instance, there is a hot discussion between clicktivism (or slacktivism) and activism (Morozov 2009; Lee 2013). The term slacktivism comes from combination of slacker and activism. Slacktivism is defined as “feel-good online activism that has zero political or social impact,” with the feel-good factor being singled out as the main reason behind the popularity of slacktivist activities (Morozov 2009, 78). Similarly, slacktivism has been defined as low-risk, low-cost activity via social media whose purpose is to raise awareness,
produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity. (Lee 2013, 811) Examples of slacktivism includes activities such as clicking “Like” to show support for an interest group on Facebook, signing online petitions, forwarding letters or videos about an issue, etc, (ibid 811), however, less real world actions. On the contrary, critics of slacktivism argue that defining slacktivism as a useless action can hurt “real” civic actions such as protests, community volunteerism, and charity (Lee 2013, 811). However, some positive connotations are also given to online engagement. In one study, researchers found that participants who signed the online petition were significantly more likely to donate money to a related charity, demonstrating a consistency effect (ibid 811). Joyce sees digital tools as vital when embedded in a broader strategy, as “digitally enhanced activism”, having often unused latent potential for activism (Joyce 2010, 57).

Regardless of clicking, sharing or commenting, I think there is always an underlying logic which impels online community to act accordingly. In order to understand certain online behavior and its consequences, I think it is necessary to be down to the earth and to pay necessary attention to driving forces behind the online dynamics, which is social media logic in this sense. In this respect, I choose to take neither techno-utopian nor techno-dystopian stance, instead I leave the discussion for the concept of social media logic, which is a grounding principle for online interaction, and to examine what benefits or limitations humanitarian organizations see under these principles.

Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate in what way social media usage change and contribute to humanitarian communication under the logic of social media and whether it reflects post-humanitarian style of communication. Here I use three main social media logic as a theoretical framework: programmability, popularity and connectivity (Van Dijck and Poell 2013). Comparing to traditional mass media, the discussion will center around how the dynamics changes in the new networked environment and what result they see from this transformation. Under the guidance of these frameworks, my research questions can be specified as follows:
1) What are the relationship between the social media logic and the expectation of the particular humanitarian aid?

2) Does humanitarianism on social media reflect any characteristics of post-humanitarianism?

In order to seek answers for the first research question I will start with what the humanitarian organization’s social media strategy is for the campaigns, such as what social media platforms they use; what content they create; and how they spread information or how they interact and connect with each other on the platforms. The second research question will be centered around the Chouliaraki’s theorization of technologization of action and de-emotionalization of the cause and will seek answers mainly from the participant’s perspectives on what they think and how they react when they see the presence of humanitarian campaigns on social media platforms. In the end, there will be a general discussion on what advantages and disadvantages social media platforms have comparing to traditional mass media in the context of humanitarian communication, which will be a curtail to find out possible potential of social media.

1.3. Contribution of the study

Even though a number of scholars has studied the role of social media in humanitarianism, this study provides a new trajectory and perspective for humanitarian communication in the digital age. I aspire to look at the role of social media in the context of social media logic, which I think is more important and essential for the discussion. The study will eventually contribute to the understanding of potential of social media in humanitarianism.

2. Literature review

2.1. Previous research on social media usage for humanitarianism

Many studies have been conducted to evaluate the implementation of various new
technologies in humanitarian appeals. Some studies discuss how the characteristics of a certain mobile apps helps humanitarian support in earthquake or tsunami, while others analyze how a specific public relation strategy through social media platforms help certain humanitarian organization to maximize their role toward their targeted goal.

However, most of the studies center around the technological perspective of online platform in humanitarianism; while few of them contribute to building a theoretical framework about social media particularly in the context of humanitarian aid. The following literatures do not cover the technological perspective, because the focus of my study is socio-cultural analysis of social media usage in humanitarian appeals, rather than examining how a certain type of technological affordance benefits humanitarian support.

2.1.1. Web sites and relationship building

In 2009, Diana Ingenhoff and A. Martina Koelling conducted a study: “The potential of Web sites as a relationship building tool for charitable fundraising NPOs” and aim to investigate the potential of Web sites as an online-communication tool of Swiss NPOs (Ingehoff and Koelling 2009, 66). Initially, their research motivation comes from emergence of two-way communication within Web 2.0. They argue that this characteristic of Internet may encourage the public into dialogue (ibid). By conducting content analysis of Web sites of 134 Swiss charitable fundraising NPOs, their purpose is to examine how these organizations use the Web to create dialogic relationships with their key stakeholder, namely potential donors and media (ibid). The study shows that the potential of the Web is not fulfilled to greater sense (ibid, 72). For instance, these organizations fail to build the relationship with their key stakeholders and media by implementing new technologies such as chat rooms or forums as well as podcast and blogs (ibid).

In my point of view, this study does lead to an interesting discussion on the relationship between Web 2.0 and humanitarian communication; however, the concept
of Web site is too broad and general. They claim that two-way communication might bring some benefits for building relationship and they aim to examine the relationship between the possible outcome and the advantage. Nevertheless, the “Web sites” do not necessarily equal to Web 2.0 that encourages two-way communication, for example, the homepage of the organization could be a Web site, but does not generate useful interaction among Internet users, which Web 2.0 (like blog or social networking sites) does. These limitations inspire me to search for more studies on this particular topic.

In “Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross use social media to build relationships” the authors investigate how social media usage in the American Red Cross creates possible opportunities for building relationships with their key publics, for instance, potential donors or volunteers (Briones et al. 2011, 37). Through conducting forty in-depth interviews with American Red Cross employees, they conclude that different kinds of online platforms, such as blogs, websites, Facebook, Twitter provide chances for the organization and stakeholders to interact in a faster way (ibid, 39). In addition, they claim that social media which is seen as an ideal platform generates two-way communication to create communality in which organizations and stakeholders can exchange ideas and it becomes easier to build mutual understanding (ibid, 41). However, they also point out barriers and limitations in utilizing social media. Firstly, there is not enough staff and time to manage social media platforms (ibid). Secondly, some professionals and the key public is lack of skills, knowledge and proper understanding of social media, especially in the older age group (ibid). And also, the authors suggest that there is a need to better introduce and apply different social media platforms in the American Red Cross (ibid).

This study acknowledges an important role of social media in American Red Cross. However, they have not dealt with how effective the online platforms are yet. The investigation on specific relationship building is conducted by adopting five principles in order to examine the organizational public relation in an online environment: commitment, control mutuality, communality, trust, and satisfaction. Even though
their study provides some suggestions to improve the social media usage in humanitarian organizations, it failed to address how helpful social media is given that there are enough staff using social media and they are well aware of the advantages of these online platforms.

2.1.2. Kony 2012—a controversial case for online humanitarian communication

In “Challenging humanitarian communication: An empirical exploration of Kony 2012”, the authors depart from the audience’s perspective and attempt to find out how the viral video Kony 2012 put moral pressure on the ironic audience, and simultaneously, to what extent the audience express their criticism towards the campaign (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014, 464). As mentioned in the beginning of the paper, Kony 2012 is a viral video posted on YouTube by American NGO Invisible Children in March 2012 (ibid, 465). It was released to fight against war criminal Joseph Kony due to his brutal activities among Ugandan and other Central African society, such as enslavement of children, mass rape and torture, etc (ibid). This had become a wide-spread video soon after its release, which hit more than one million view a few days later (ibid). However, the expectation of Invisible Children had not been met, but instead a lot of criticism was given by the audience regarding the true purpose of the video (ibid).

After the release of the video, many professionals expressed critical opinions towards the message. To make the war criminal famous, Invisible Children (IC) made quite a lot of effort on the narratives in this video, however what audience questions is that they are missing deeper and first-hand investigations of the situation (Hickman 2012, 477). The idea being conveyed in the video is more likely a context of superiority of western-heroism over the incompetent and passive African public (Madianou 2012, 10). However, the claims are not recognized by African audience, such as Rosebell Kagumire, who is a blogger from Uganda (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014, 467). She said in her video that actually there are lots of local initiatives actively participated in the war against Josef Kony, and the situation has been improved (YouTube 2012). This means that Kony 2012 actually over simplified the situation, and this makes the
audience become suspicious on the credibility of appeal. Besides, they claimed that IC ignores the complexity of the case rather it only scales it down to Uganda even though Josef Kony has spread his power into other nations in central Africa (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014, 468). Some criticism has also been given to IC as an organization when they are claimed to propagate the campaign for themselves, rather than helping central African public, namely, the funds have been spent on making videos and travelling, but barely on the campaign itself (ibid). Moreover, IC seems to be too deterministic upon the solution for the issue, pointing out the only solution, rather than leave it as an open-ended question (ibid, 469). This eventually might discourage the audience to act in other possible ways to fight against the injustice (ibid).

Even though, Kony 2012 was unprecedented in the history of online humanitarianism due to its popularity, scholars argue that it is nothing than an example of online “slacktivism” (ibid). Evgeney Morozov claims that “the problem with political activism facilitated by social networking sites is that it has nothing to do with one’s commitment to ideas and politics in general, but rather to impress one’s friends” (ibid). As Chouliaraki also pointed out that Kony 2012 is mobilizing the public for an action, while what it failed to do is that “cultivate a deeper understanding of why the humanitarian action is so important” (Chouliaraki 2012, 76).

Many online humanitarianism was surrounded by the concept of cosmopolitanism as the author argues. The video was aimed to raise a so called “global compassion” which is described as “moral sensibility and concern for remote strangers form different continents, cultures and societies” (Höijer 2004, 514). This is later theorized by media scholars as cosmopolitanism in which the representation of distance suffering can foster a new moral sensibilities and reduce the gap between audience and victims of humanitarian crisis (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014, 470). However, what the authors argue is that the studies mostly focus on the representation of suffering rather than the receiver of the message, namely the audience (ibid). This makes it difficult to look at how the audiences’ respond to the narrative about the distant suffering (ibid).
Despite the effort to make cosmopolitan imaginary possible, humanitarianism is actually facing crisis. Humanitarian professionals are confronting an increasing demand for professionalization and fierce competition for public support and visibility (ibid, 471). At the same time, gradually emerging public suspicion towards their financial transparency also creates considerable challenge for the organizations (ibid). These are due to the consistent marketization of the humanitarian field, which intertwines with the new form of communication with the help of emerging new technologies (ibid). As Chouliaraki argues, this foster a new form of humanitarianism which is called “post-humanitarianism”, a kind of “self-oriented form of solidarity of short term and low intensity engagement of the cause over an other-oriented solidarity if deeply felt, ideological commitment” (ibid). Post-humanitarianism is not only embodied in the audience commitment, which is seen as communitarian rather than cosmopolitan, but also in a form of communication strategies that humanitarian organizations focus more on the branding instead of informing public moral responsibility of the appeal and global solidarity (ibid).

In the circumstance, the public becomes skeptical towards humanitarian organizations, regardless of organization’s efforts to gain attention from the audience as well as gather more donations (ibid, 472). The audiences always question the trustworthiness of a certain claim (ibid). As Chouliaraki describes “an impure and ambivalent figure that stands, at once, as skeptical towards any moral appeal to solidarity action, and yet, open to doing something about those who suffer” (ibid).

Inspired by these theoretical arguments, the authors narrow down their research questions and attempt to further investigate ironic appraisals of the audience and its indications in the humanitarian communication by Kony 2012 (ibid). The discussion is built on three main repertoires on the social and philosophical phenomenon of denial (Sue 2001). Sue described in her previous work that, audiences very likely escape from a moral pressure when they are asked to act upon the humanitarian causes (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014, 473). They always justify such decision mainly because of the following three strategies: 1. “the medium is the message”
which means the audiences are likely to be skeptical on trustworthiness and form of
the message itself; 2. “shoot the messenger”, when the credibility of the source of the
information are questioned; 3. “babies and bathwater” where the audience are
doubtful about the legitimacy of the action, for instance donating money (ibid). Based
on the three denial strategies, the authors attempts to group and justify the audience’s
critical reaction towards Kony 2012 (ibid). In particular, they try to investigate how
the audience’s critiques influence their perceptions on the moral responsibility (ibid).
In the light of these thoughts, the authors summarize their research question as
follows: “1. to what extent did Kony 2012 video evoke, in its viewers, a sense of
personal moral responsibility to act? 2. to what extent did critical appraisals of Kony
2012 and Invisible Children mitigate this sense of personal moral responsibility to act
(ibid, 474)?”

The authors conducted an online survey in two major Dutch universities and collected
answers from 204 participants (ibid). The survey includes 6 main sections, ranging
from the background information about the participants from their knowledge about
Kony 2012 and their response and attitude towards the video (ibid). And among them,
the authors emphasize a variable where degree of engagement is examined among the
respondents, such as how likely they will act towards this campaign after watching it
(ibid). At the same time, they also attempt to explore the critical stance of the
participant according the three denial strategies (ibid).

According the survey results, von Engelhardt and Jansz discover that the majority of
the respondents (53.4%) have heard about Kony 2012, among them over 70% have
known the campaign through social media (ibid, 475). Almost half of the respondents
(41.2%) watched the video at least once, while 29% of them only watched 5 to 15
mins (ibid). When it comes to moral responsibility, as the authors expected, the
audiences who watched 5-15 minutes feel morally bounded to the campaign than the
ones who quit within first 5 minutes (ibid). However, the audience who only watched
15 mins of the video feel even more morally responsible than those who watched the
whole video (ibid). Then, the authors dig into the relationship between the moral
stance and the criticism behind the choice (ibid). As a result, based on the framework of three denial strategies, they claim that the skepticism upon the way the story was told does not affect the degree of perceived moral responsibility (ibid). However, the reliability of the organization and the legitimacy of the particular action significantly affect the level of moral responsibility expressed by the participants (ibid).

The authors discover that the content showed on the first and second half of the video is the main reason behind the varying degree of moral responsibility (ibid, 480). In the first half, the audiences are informed of how brutal the LRA is and how miserable the life of the victim is (ibid). But in the second half it is more about the grass-root actions taken by the young participants to change the situation (ibid). The audiences are morally attached to the first half of the video because they are touched by the miserable life of the children. However, they stay skeptical to the second part where grass-root actions are introduced as the solution for the crisis (ibid). They also discovered that the gender difference does not contribute to level of moral responsibility, even though in many studies are described as so (ibid). When it comes to the relationship between criticism the audience have given to the campaign and the extent of moral responsibility to take part in the campaign, their conclusion is that they are not necessarily correlated (ibid). Besides, their empirical evidence shows that the authenticity and objectivity of the campaign do not affect the public to stay positive about Kony 2012 (ibid, 481). They believe that Kony 2012 does create moral responsibility, but this hasn’t been enough to urge the public to take actions towards distant suffering, so instead, this can only be described as a post-humanitarian style of engagement (ibid).

Even though von Engelhardt and Jansz have given some empirical evidence and sophisticated analysis concerning critiques given to Kony 2012, some points need to be further addressed. For instance, they did not mention why the validity of grass-root movements towards of the campaign are challenged by the audience. In my opinion, the reason behind the skepticism might be helpful for organizations to re-evaluate their method and strategy. For example, is it because IC lacks financial transparency?
Or is it because IC engages in power relations and world politics? Although the authors do reflect on Chouliaraki’s concept of Ironic Spectator, but the reason why the public can be so ironic need to be further discussed and discovered.

2.1.3. Humanitarian campaigns in social media—a representation of polymedia event

Among the studies, the one which more aligns with this project is called “Humanitarian Campaigns in Social Media: Network Architectures and Polymedia Events.” In the study, Mirca Madianou (2012, 249) assesses the optimism behind the opportunities that social networking sites bring to humanitarian communication. Through conducting two case studies, Kony 2012 and WaterForward, she firstly claims that the architecture of social networking sites encourages the post-humanitarian style of communication, which is mentioned in the beginning of the text as “technologization of action” and “the de-emotionalization of the cause” (Chouliaraki 2010, 117). Although the campaign encourages actions toward distant other, for instance, donating for distant others who need help, the interaction between people on social networking sites only occurs at a communication level. That is to say, people do not care about the suffering of distant others, instead they engage in the online conversation because of their significant others are watching them (Madianou 2012, 264). Thus the two campaigns “do not fulfil the cosmopolitan criteria of reflexive dialogue and imagination” (ibid). However, she raises a new concept, polymedia events, which indicates “a different phenomenon altogether when an event triggered by the media generates a series of reactions or related events which are played out in different media platforms” (ibid, 261). For example, if Kony 2012 video firstly appeared on YouTube, however it opens up a wide range of discussion on other social media platforms, like Facebook or blogs, in respect to its controversial characteristics. The author claims that through inviting audiences to engage in decentralized narratives polymedia events can potentially extend beyond the limitation of communication on social networking sites, and play a role in cultivating cosmopolitan sensibilities (ibid, 264).
Comparing to the studies discussed above, Madianou conducts a more detailed analysis on the potential of social networking sites in humanitarianism. Social networking sites have their own merits on humanitarian communication in a way that increasing number of audiences gather together with a high degree of disintermediation (Madianou 2012, 250). That is to say, audience can reach each other without powerful intermediaries and gatekeepers, such as big media corporations (ibid). Thus, this increases the visibility of the humanitarian organizations as well as the distant suffers.

However, merely increasing visibility will not be enough for humanitarian campaigns. According to Madianou, there is an assumption that “mediation of suffering through social media favors action in which users are perceived to be actively involved in ‘doing’ something in response to a situation or a cause” (ibid). Madianou (2012, 252) suggests that the state of ‘doing’ something, namely action, should be discussed in the context of engagement, which consists of three analytical dimension: understanding/awareness, talk and action. Arendt (1998) indicates that among the three types of engagement, action is listed as the superior one which is hard to be achieved (Couldry et al. 2007). However, some scholars have different opinions on the importance of real action. Boltanski (1999), Dewey (1927) and Habermas (1989), on the contrary, argue that talk or “public speech” is an important form of engagement. Action is interrelated to talk or speech, because without talk, action will be less revelatory (Arendt 1998, 178). However, this does not mean that understanding/awareness is less important in this context. It is the prerequisite for the other two types of engagement, and it is taking an important role in meaningful action, because it can be regarded as hollow if someone takes action without understating and awareness (Madianou 2012, 253).

In my point of view, the consideration of different types of engagement can be crucial in the humanitarian communication studies. Question of engagement is always drawing our attention in humanitarian appeal, like I mentioned in UNICEF commercial in the beginning of the thesis. Some people just understand the horrible
situation of the needy community, but no further action is taken. This poses a question whether understanding or awareness is enough to change the situation. Therefore, different levels of engagement may inform us how much value or impact the humanitarian organization brings to the needy community. The three types of engagement, as far as I am concerned, need to be taken care of in the humanitarian communication studies. Therefore, in the thesis work the question of engagement will also be a part of the inquiry.

The purpose of the Madianou is to assess the biggest promises of social media in fostering cosmopolitan public in humanitarianism. As Lillie Chouliaraki (2006, 2008) points out, there are two main ethical norms in humanitarian communication: cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. These are two different disposition of global connectivity. Cosmopolitan style of connectivity emphasizes that knowing about distant suffers should encourage reflexivity and responsibility (Thompson 1995, 263). Namely, as Thompson (ibid) states it is a “democratization of responsibility, in the sense that concern for others becomes an increasing part of the daily lives of more individuals.” On the contrary, communitarian version of global connectivity fails to have any reflexivity and responsibility; instead, it is more of a “feeling in common” of spectators to go beyond national boundaries through different media platforms (Chouliaraki 2008, 373). In other words, it is lack of engagement or common intention to support the distant others.

The question of engagement has been a part of the debate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. The aim of Madianou’s work is to explore whether a certain public engagement on social media reflect cosmopolitan or communitarian consciousness. She refers to previous work of Chouliaraki (2006) in which she develops a typology of news reports: adventures, ecstatic and emergency news. According to Chouliaraki (ibid) adventures and ecstatic news foster a communitarian public, but in contrast, emergency news which lies in between can call for engagement of spectators through leading them into a “social solidarity” and make cosmopolitanism happen (Chouliaraki 2008, 387). However, according to Madianou
this is just an example of the analytical discussion on humanitarian communication (ibid). She aspires to extend this discussion to the social media spectrum, because she concerns that people express sympathy toward distant suffers, but this might not necessarily turn into a helpful action (Kyriakidou 2012; Ong 2011).

Social media are popularly seen as an opportunity to correct this as, due to their interactive nature, they afford more opportunities for immediate action, such as participating in petitions, donating funds, or simply reposting comments. Still, a systematic theorization of action is necessary in order to evaluate what constitutes action in the first place and what it reveals about the moral agency of the subject.

(Madianou 2012, 252)

As well, Madianou mentioned what Chouliaraki (2010) calls “post- humanitarian” appeals which will be discussed in details in theoretical part of this article. Post-humanitarianism is termed as “technologization of action” and the “de-emotionalization of the cause” (Chouliaraki 2010, 117). These can be described, in short, as kinds of textual games, low intensity emotional regimes, technological imagination of instant gratification without any justification (ibid). Under these assumptions, Madianou situates her studies in architecture of social networking sites, which is “the kind of actions they afford and the social dynamics that they engender” (Madianou 2012, 253).

In order to go into details of this architecture, Madianou returns to the essential of social networking sites (SNS), which can be understood in three aspects: 1) they impel public to build semi-public profile within a certain limitation produced by the networking sites themselves; 2) these site has the ability to present a list of other users to whom the user is connected; 3) “view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (boyd and Ellison 2007). According to Madianou, although each SNS has their unique characteristics, these underlying
principles are common to all SNS (Madianou 2012, 253). But still she makes a comparison between Twitter and Facebook, which are listed as most popular social networking sites. She attempts to find out the difference and commonness of the social networking sites and the possible outcome they afford to the interaction (ibid, 254).

First of all, these two sites have different degree of openness (Madianou 2012, 254). She made a vivid metaphor for them, in which Twitter is regarded as a “public park,” while Facebook is described as a “walled garden” (ibid). This is due to the fact that Twitter is publicly accessible and searchable, even for the people who don’t have Twitter accounts (ibid). In contrast, Facebook profiles can only be seen by those who have accounts (ibid). Besides, the privacy settings in Facebook are much more complicated than the settings in Twitter, which can make it easy to control and customize privacy (ibid). However, both sites are centered around the people who are connected to each other in terms of common interest or preference (ibid). But the degree of openness may affect how much content and their online performances they want to share with others. Therefore, according to Madianou, it is important to pay attention to who are the imagined audiences of humanitarian campaigns, since they are the ones who receive the information and the ones who decide how to react to the information (ibid).

Secondly, Facebook and Twitter differs in the richness of content of the profile (Madianou 2012, 254). Profiles has significant role because they show how the users organize themselves in social media environment which is one part of self-representation (ibid). But besides this, profiles also are recording the users’ interaction with other contacts, which they cannot have a direct control upon, but still a part of their self-representation (ibid). Facebook profiles are richer than the Twitter profiles, because they are heavily customized because it enables users to add photos, videos and so on (ibid). However, in contrast, Twitter profiles are organized in the specific sequence of conversations and tweets (ibid).
Although Facebook and Twitter differ in the variety of ways, being a SNS, they do have commonness as well. Boyd (2010, 46) suggests four main structural affordances of SNS. They include

- persistence (the storage capacity of the medium and the permanence of its content);
- replicability (the fact that content can be easily reproduced, copied and therefore disseminated);
- scalability (the visibility of this content by other users which is not always controlled by the author of the original content); and finally,
- searchability (the fact that this content is accessed through search).

(boyd 2010, 46)

These affordances are important, because according to boyd, they can create a certain dynamic which can shape communication in social networking sites (boyd 2010, 46-9). Apart from these affordances, another characteristic of SNS is that, unlike face-to-face interaction, in SNS interactions it is hard to assume its implied audiences (Madianou 2014, 255). Thus, users tend to differentiate a bounded audience who received a message of their online action and who does not necessarily get access to every action the users are performing (ibid). But still, to fully control the online performance is hardly achieved on social media platforms. This implies that most of the content still remains visible to public rather than the intended recipient (ibid).

What she means here is that even though users can choose to conceal certain humanitarian causes that they are supporting, it is hard to control their membership to these sites or organizations (ibid). Additionally, scalability of the SNS, can distribute the piece of information to a wider network, such as a friend’s news feed which can be possibly passed to their friends’ news feed (ibid). Most importantly these online interactions show the fact that it is actually telling something about the profile owner, in another word, it is a kind of narrative that the owner presents to his/her friends (ibid). If the SNS user imagines himself in a bounded network or his actions are targeted to a specific audience, then this will lead to an analysis of moral content of
actions in social networking sites (ibid).

Madianou (2012) conducts two case studies, WaterForward and Kony 2012 under the guidance of the theoretical framework and assumptions mentioned above. She mainly focuses on two major SNS sites, Facebook and Twitter, on which WaterForward is connected to a digital photo album where the audiences can invite friends at the cost of 10 USD so that they can add a portrait on the project homepage (Madianou 2012, 256). For this campaign, the author mainly focuses on four aspects which are visible on the SNS (ibid). 1) the user’s name, let’s say someone who is called Jessy; 2) the person who invited Jessy at the cost of 10 USD; 3) the number of people who Jessy has invited; and finally 4) how many people get access to the clean water in the end (ibid). These numbers apparently become the SNS user’s self-representation (ibid).

However, as Madianou mentions, this is not an ideal result for this particular humanitarian campaign (ibid). Showing merely how many people get clean water can never be convincing enough. Firstly, audiences do not know how this money funded for the distant-sufferers; secondly, there is little information about needy communities (ibid). The users’ online action can merely be typical post-humanitarian, while actions are technologized and action is de-emotionalized (Chouliaraki 2010).

The author’s second case study is Kony 2012, which is organized by non-profit organization Invisible Children to fight against war criminal Joseph Kony in Uganda. As we discussed in the previous section, this case is not free from criticism, because it is regarded as helping US military intervention in Uganda by making Kony famous (Madianou 2012, 252). If this is true, the social networking sites can be a catalyst for this purpose instead of making the invisible children visible and change their miserable situation.

After presenting the case studies, Madianou summarizes her analysis as follows:

First of all, the campaigners no longer depend on the traditional gatekeepers to spread the information to large public, which is called disintermediation of the causes (Madianou 2012, 257). According to Madianou (ibid) the SNS sites make it possible
for campaigners to reach large public, at the same time the audiences can freely get access to the open network domain where they can react to the information. But this does not mean this has nothing to do with mainstream media at all. Support from celebrities can be a catalyst for success of campaign, because they can send a signal to traditional media through their attention and commitment, which imply that how much importance they attach to certain campaign (ibid). They are the new intermediaries who come between audiences and traditional media. Obviously, these help to raise the visibility of the causes, however, “increase in quantity does not necessarily mean improvement in quality” (ibid). The reason behind this concern is that the representation of distance sufferers is problematic (ibid). For instance, in WaterForward, all the online participation aims at building a self-image, instead of helping distant others. On the other hand, in Kony 2012, there is no historical contextualization, in other words, they are just showing how needy and hopeless these children are without a narrative of the background of the incidence (ibid). All in all, Madianou concludes that it cannot be legit to say that these campaigns are “democratization of responsibility” that positive role to connect the spectator and distant sufferer (Cohen 2001).

Secondly, both of the campaigns expect actions. And fortunately the SNS users actually do take actions, for instance, in Kony 2012, people is asked to either forward/share the video or to buy Kony 2012 merchandise products, like T-shirt, while in WaterForward campaign audiences are asked to donate money to get a place in the “online” charity book (Madianou 2012, 259). The audiences are taking action for the variety of reason, for example, in WaterForward, they take action because they have the connection with other friends and donating money can be a representation of self-image in the bounded network (ibid). As for Kony 2012, SNS users are touched by the story of the children in Uganda, and spontaneously share the message and even attempt to buy the merchandise products (ibid). However, what is crucially important is the fundamental question of “why” they are taking these actions (ibid). As well, the absence of the fundamental concern about the background of the campaign, which
happened to both WaterForward and Kony 2012 (ibid), implies that these action can be nothing more than a peripheral engagement. Madianou (ibid) concludes that

Without an understanding of the causes of humanitarian appeals and without a moral framework of engagement with distant others, action becomes almost meaningless at least when evaluate from a standpoint of cosmopolitan ethics. The post-humanitarian nature of the campaigns is accentuated by the architecture of SNS, which bring together networks of people who are known to one another or who are already similar and thus orientate action at a communitarian level.

However, what I doubt here is how the author knows one action is meaningless without evaluating the real impact of the campaign. Although the evaluation might not be that easy, the author talked little about the outcome of the campaign. And in this case, negative judgment towards the communitarian nature of online interaction can be somewhat problematic. Secondly, the author states that post-humanitarian nature, which can be illustrated as technologization of action and de-emotionalization of the causes is accentuated by the architecture of SNS sites. However, this is rather deterministic. It is too assertive to say that social networking sites is the cause for de-emotionalization. Will the situation be better when we don’t have social networking sites? The author mentions earlier in the text, SNS has structural affordance: persistence, replicability, scalability and searchability, however these affordances are just partially catalyst for de-emotionalizing us to a certain humanitarian appeal. Even though it is hard to compare the effect of social media and mass media, it is not legit to say that all the affordance of SNS can lead to a negative effect on humanitarianism. They probably have some merits compared to mainstream media. So this is why I choose to re-evaluate the possible outcome of humanitarian campaigns through in the context of social media logic, which I think more important in this sense.
Thirdly, in these two campaigns, according to the author, cosmopolitan sensibility is hardly achieved (Madianou 2012, 260). Beck states that “cosmopolitan sensibility opens up space of dialogical imagination in everyday practice” which involves “the capacity to see oneself from the perspective of cultural others and to give this practical effect in one’s own experience through the exercise of boundary-transcending imagination” (Beck 2006, 89). Therefore, what Madianou sees from the case study is that SNS users can hardly put themselves into other’s shoe, instead their online interaction or engagement is only on a communitarian level (Madianou 2012, 261).

Last but not the least, even though these two campaigns are on communitarian level, Madianou develops a new concept- polymedia event, which can be possible to bring reflexive cosmopolitanism (Madianou 2012, 261). “Polymedia events refer to a different phenomenon altogether when an event triggered by the media generates a series of reactions or related events which are played out in different media platforms” (ibid). Traditional media events are usually planned events by large broadcasting companies to invite to a certain national events which can build a collective identity, while the polymedia events are basically unplanned, transnational and decentralized (ibid). An example for polymedia event can be Kony 2012, which was firstly presented on YouTube channel, but criticized and discussed in various media platforms, such as blogs, online newspapers, and so on (ibid). For instance, Al Jazeera uses software to get in touch with victims of Kony, and investigate their own experiences (ibid). The aftermath of the polymedia event can go far beyond the original film, because we need to look at various channels in which the topic is analyzed (ibid). What is crucial here is when the polymedia event happened. They can be a good way to foster a moral education (ibid, 263). Although certain SNS leads to actions at a communitarian level, they can turn into a part of a wider environment of polymedia event, which can dedicate to encouraging internet users to pose a question of “why” before they
give any kind of help for humanitarian causes (ibid). This plays a crucial role to understand distant other and can be prerequisite to further action and meaningful engagement (ibid).

Generally speaking, Madianou presents an interesting study on the humanitarian communication on social media. What I liked most in her study is the concept of polymedia event, which I think is a new conceptual understanding not only in the realm of humanitarian communication, but also in any kind of online communication. Although she couldn’t discuss much about how polymedia event specifically work, this can be a promising outlook in future humanitarian communication studies.

However, as far as I am concerned this study is not free from some weaknesses. First of all, the conceptual framework on the architecture of SNS was not discussed in details. Even though, according to the author this study analyzes humanitarian communication from a perspective of structural affordance of social networking sites, but it seems that not enough attention has been given to this particular aspect even though she listed several structural affordances of SNS sites, such as persistence, scalability, replicability and searchability, in the beginning of the text. For example, it is unclear if Madianou implied anything about the searchability of the SNS in humanitarian communication. Even though scalability of social networking sites has been brought up in the discussion in the case of WaterForwd, where she states scalability enables messages to be spread in the bounded network, and because of this SNS users start to think about how they should behave in online environment, because these messages can be closely related to their self-representation. As a consequence, architectural affordance of SNS can indulge users to stay in the fantasy of “helping” distance others. However, the searchability has not been discussed adequately yet, and as a result, it is hard to come to the conclusion above and to know whether the structural feature has positive or negative impact on humanitarian communication. In this respect, I would argue the judgement of the author can be probably one-sided.

Secondly, there is lack of connection between engagement (awareness/understanding,
talk and action) and the outcome of the campaign. According to Madianou, understanding is important in humanitarian causes, because it is an inseparable part of cosmopolitan sensibility (Madianou 2012). However, what is the actual contribution of understanding or awareness in specific term to the success of humanitarian campaign? I would say Madianou does not take this into consideration, while I think it is important to consider if we would like to know the effect of social media in humanitarianism.

Thirdly, as I mentioned earlier, Madianou does not pay enough attention to the result of the humanitarian campaign. In my point of view if we would like to know whether a certain campaign is successful or not, we should look at its outcome or result. Merely discussing the dynamics of online interaction without thinking about the consequences of the action can be inadequate. Therefore, I would like to pay relatively more attention on the outcome of the campaign and its possible relationship with social media.

Departing from the studies discussed above, my argument will be that merely evaluating the relationship between the stakeholders and the Web sites as a whole (Ingehoff and Koelling 2009) will not be enough. There could be lots of reasons behind the failure and success of each humanitarian campaign on social media, like the controversial case of Kony 2012 (Von Engelhardt and Jansz 2014). It needs us to dig more and to critically evaluate the dynamics of humanitarian communication on social media. Even though Madianou starts the discussion in this respect, there is still lack of consideration of the outcome and result of campaign. Therefore, I choose an organization level for my study because they are the entities who set the goal for certain humanitarian support. Secondly, they can see and evaluate the outcome of the engagement. Then unlike other studies, my focus of the discussion will be social media logic, which I think is most fundamental realm when thinking about the role and potential of social media in this field of study.

So why social media logic? Before understanding how new media ecosystem reshapes
social order or chains of events, there is need to call attention to social media logic—the strategies, mechanisms, and economies underpinning theses platforms’ dynamics (Dijck and Poell 2013, 3). Again according to Dijck and Poell:

> The logic of social media, rooted in its grounding principles and strategies, is gradually invading all areas of public life. Besides print news and broadcasting, it also affects law and order, social activism, politics, and so forth. Therefore, its sustain logic and widespread dissemination deserve to be scrutinized in detail in order to better understand its impact in various domains. (2013, 3)

As can be seen above, social media logic is the grounding principles on which online interactions are happening, including the humanitarian supports. This is why I situate my study in this framework. More detailed illustration of social media and its logic will be discussed later in this text. However, before that I think it is necessary to present transformation humanitarian communication.

### 2.2. Transformation of humanitarian communication

In order to approach the discussion of transformation of humanitarian communication, I think it is important to look at the work of Lillie Chouliaraki who developed the notion of post-humanitarianism which is one of the major paradigms in recent humanitarian communication. In the next few sections, I will present her major concerns in theorizing this new form of communication.

#### 2.2.1. Question of solidarity

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary solidarity is a unity that produces or is based on community of interest, objectives, and standards. Spicker illustrates solidarity from the following dimensions. First of all, solidarity is altruism and responsibility (Spicker 2000, 38). “Altruism is behavior for the benefit of other people, and it is usually assumed to be motivated by a selfless concern for other people” (ibid). However, the solidaristic action is not simply altruistic, but instead, some extended meanings have been embedded in the concept of solidarity as well. As Spicker
suggests, altruistic action is the result of social expectation, norm and obligations (ibid). Altruism is more or less embedded in our daily practice while it is treated as a “sub-category of ‘prosocial behavior’ which is the action done for the benefit of others” (ibid). For example, vacating a seat on the bus for elderly is a kind of good manner but also a sort of altruism. We do so because we feel like we are bounded in such a norm or obligations. However, obligation or responsibility is not always regarded as equal to everyone because of varying social distance (ibid). Instead, the obligation is characterized by mutual exchange or reciprocity if people have more distance; namely, people expect something in return if they provide help for acquaintances or distant others rather than family members (ibid, 39). “the character of generalized and balanced exchange begins more directly to reflect the concerns of self-interest” (ibid). Therefore, when we are conscious about our motivation, the reciprocity will always be embedded in altruism (ibid).

Secondly, solidarity has a demand on mutual aid. Spicker (2000, 40) suggests that people should act collectively in order to be more rational. We cannot deny that people act in terms of their self-interest, but this is not a good way to maximize utility for everyone, instead collective action is regarded as a better solution for this (ibid). But of course, there are potential problems to perform collective action, since people concern risk and benefit (ibid). Some actions can bring high risk or cost to a person, comparing to perceived benefit (ibid). Hence, there is always such a dilemma of whether to be part of the collective action and to provide and accept the mutual aid. However, what Spicker thinks is that “collective action permits the pooling of skills so that a person can draw on the skills of others… collective action, consequently, increases potential” (ibid).

Nevertheless, what is noteworthy here is that there is always a concern of ‘free riders’ who probably jeopardize the initial interest of other people who has passion in the beginning and dedicate too much for the group, as a consequence, it makes them to quit the collective action (Spicker 2000). However, Sugden (1991) suggests that this is not necessarily true in terms of the what they found about social behavior, for
instance, people don’t stop participating in charity just because other people do. But instead, as Stone (1997) points out, some aspects can motivate people to be more active in collective action. For example, people are influenced by ‘reward of the cooperation’ and they can easily understand their own interest in different ways when they are part of the group (ibid).

All in all, Spicker claims that solidarity cannot be separated from mutual aid, which is embedded in collective action. This can be a better solution for achieving a better outcome in any group activates, because it maximizes everyone’s’ potential and interest (ibid).

Thirdly, solidarity and social obligation can cross the national boundaries (Spicker 2000, 53). Solidarity, to some extent, is connected to national identity (ibid). National identity is based on historical, cultural and linguistic characteristics (ibid). It is also reflected on social norms of a certain community. “The impact of nationality on contact, status and the structure of obligation tend to identify solidarity closely to nation” (ibid). However, according to Spicker, this is not limited to geographical proximity, but instead the very nature of solidarity developed through common history contact, interaction, trade, military conquest, religious, linguistic link and so forth (ibid 54). I think what is crucial and noteworthy here is that solidarity is based on the sense of commonness, as mentioned above, people feel more connected because they share common culture, history and social norm. This is a prerequisite for collective action which is integral part of solidarity. However, the trend of globalization makes it less possible to perceive solidarity as merely a nationality, because of technolization of communication and high degree of cultural exchange. This probably makes it possible to create more commonness among people from different parts of the world. In this research, I think it can be worthy to look at how digitalization shifts the commonness and how they affect the formation of solidarity.

As Lille Chouliraki discussed, solidarity can be classified into two types- solidarity as salvation and solidarity as revolution (ibid). Solidarity as salvation, which has a
longest tradition, is mainly connected to the moral response on the suffering, while salvation as revolution is associated with the criticism on the causes of these suffering (ibid). Solidarity as salvation usually remains apolitical, but in contrast, solidarity as revolution often considers the political or economic injustice as the reason behind the suffering (ibid, 11). Although both of the solidarity is supposed to be regarded as a social mechanism helping to change the situation of sufferers, they cannot be free from the critics that illustrate its negative outcome rather than positive ones.

Solidarity as salvation can never be pure humanitarianism and apolitical, instead “all choices to save lives are ultimately political choices about which suffering is worth alleviating and who is to blame for it” (ibid, 13). As a result, what Chouliaraki (ibid, 14) hypothesize is that the traditional ‘other-oriented solidarity’ now is replaced by individualistic morality of ‘feel good action’. The transformation of solidarity will be illustrated in details in the latter section where the post-humanitarianism is discussed.

### 2.2.2. Technologization of communication

The realization of solidarity is interconnected with the process of communication. Even though we have witnessed technologization of communication long ago when we had, such as telephone in late 19th century enabling individual to have conversation with each other regardless of limitation of space, nowadays the form of communication has already gone far beyond than that. Form of communication can change the way we interact with others. The development of Web 2.0 enables us to use and create user-generated content with the help of social networking sites. Humanitarian communication no longer depends on the traditional mass media as gatekeepers, but they have already situated themselves in the new form of digital media environment. The new media has its own affordance which impels the humanitarian organization to behave accordingly. Chouliaraki (2013, 15) suggests that humanitarian communication has changed, in the way of technologization which implies the following two features: firstly, “it uses the interactive affordances of the internet so as to talk about distant others, yet it ultimately communicates something about ‘us’;” and secondly, internet gives us an opportunity to connect to campaign
organizers and keeps us informed as well as respond to “what to do,” however we never pay necessary attention to the question of “why we do this.”

The reason behind this transformation, firstly, is the “invitation to self-expression” which means compared to mass media new digital technologies provide a necessary infrastructures and invite user to express themselves on the online platforms instead of only receiving a piece of information from traditional media (Chouliaraki 2013, 16). As a result, this brings technologization of solidarity, which indicates potentiality of digital media in evoking public’s moral emotion towards distant suffering by enabling them to click “likes” on Facebook, express their personal feelings towards the cause, read the related news or watch videos concerning the cause, and comment on it, or even click on donation and buy T-shirt or accessories which is associated with the humanitarian appeal (ibid). According to Chouliaraki, self-expression calls for “new plurality of voices and images to be heard and seen” (ibid). Thus, self-expression prevent humanitarian campaigns from “othering” distance sufferers, instead, organizers create a dynamic between themselves and public by inviting them to self-expression and thus call for a moral engagement (ibid).

However, this does not mean self-expression is free from disadvantages. Chouliaraki argues that self-expressive communication overly focuses on how to develop an aid market through the tactic of evoking emotions of donors rather than to call for solidarity by putting the attention on the vulnerability on distance others (ibid). Primarily, she admits that new media encourages the public to participate in online activism, for instance donating for a campaign or signing on a petition (ibid). This is in line with the monitoryal citizenship, which Schudson describes as “a mod of citizenship that no longer relies on our physical presence or sustained commitment to common affairs but on a more fragile and fleeting public sensibility” (ibid). However, she doubts that new media can play a crucial role in leading the public to cosmopolitan morality, but instead it is just narcissistic indulgence in which the western public is “an actor and spectator of its own performance” rather than letting multiple voices from distant others be part of the discourse (ibid).
If the first and foremost feature of technologization is self-expression, Chouliaraki lists absence of an explicit message of solidarity as the second characteristic (Chouliaraki 2013, 18). Organizers more likely brand their website or organization, rather than ask the public to engage in solidarity towards distant others (ibid, 19). This is primarily because of so called compassion fatigue from the public, a feeling of reluctance because the audience has been repeatedly informed of the cause, so that they are not interested any more. Therefore, the organizers tend to skip vulnerable representation of distance suffering in order to avoid the suspicion from the public (ibid). Therefore, this results in an illusion that through branding, the western public has been well educated about the solidarity, but in fact they never consider if the public engaged in any action as expected (ibid). In reality, despite the western public is well aware of “human obligation” of helping the impoverished others, they actually tend to prioritize domestic issues over distant suffering (ibid). So in this case, purely depending on branding itself rather than presenting information on solidarity may actually minimize the possibility to link vulnerability to justice (ibid).

The major influence of technologization in humanitarian communication is that, according to Chouliaraki, the shift from the theatrical form, namely paradigm of pity “where solidarity is anchored on the spectacle of the other, inspiring the normative moralities of salvation and revolution” towards the anti-theoretical form, namely paradigm of irony “where solidarity is anchored on the spectacle of others like us, inviting our capacity for self-reflection” (Chouliaraki 2013, 20). What is crucial here is that, Chouliaraki questions if it is legit to stay positive in contemporary humanitarian imaginary in which public favors emotionality of the self rather than act towards others and engage in justice (ibid).

In summary, there is a shift in the concept of solidarity when it comes to humanitarian communication. As Chouliaraki suggests, while the public is more likely other-oriented in the past, now it is replaced by “feel-good action” of individuals. This cannot be separated from the technologization of communication, where internet-based interaction ultimately asks us to communicate something about “us”
rather than focusing on distant others. All of these eventually lead to the formation of a new paradigm-post-humanitarianism. The concept will be presented in details in the later section.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. The concept of social media logic
3.1.1. General concept of media logic

Decades ago scholars raised a concept of mediatization, which refers to: “the meta process by which everyday practices and social relations are historically shaped by mediating technologies and media organizations” (Livingstone 2009, X). Compared to traditional interpersonal communication, society has already situated itself in the social process in which media is the key tool for communication. In such a circumstance, media logic is a driving mechanism behind the mediatization (Lundby 2009, 7). Hjavard further defines mediatization as the process in which social interactions to an accelerative degree depends on or submitted to the media and their logic (ibid, 102). Likewise, Schrott specifies mediatization as “a social process of media—induced social change which functions by the institutionalization of media logic in various social spheres” (ibid).

Thus, media logic being inherited to the mediatization processes was firstly introduced by David Altheide and Robert Snow in 1979. They initially refer media logic as “a way of seeing and interpreting social affairs” (1979, 9). Then they further specify the concept: “as logic they also involve an implicit trust that we can communicate the events of our daily lives through the various formats of the media” (Altheide and Snow 1979, 9). To sum up, the media logic is defined as “a form of communication; the process through which media presents and transmit information” (ibid).

Besides, other scholars also present their understanding of the media logic. Hjarvard shows media logic as “institutional and technological modus operandi of the media.
This includes the ways in which media distribute material and symbolic resources (e.g., according to ratings or reading figures) and operate with the help of formal and informal rules (e.g., news criteria)” (Lundby 2009, 102). Schrott explains institutionalization of media logic happens in media organizations or in other subsystems of society as the specific “mechanism” of mediatization. (ibid). For Schrott, media logic is defined as “orientation frame for people or organizations that we are scarcely aware of” (ibid).

What is noteworthy here is the focus on the format when considering media logic. Altheide and Snow put stress on formats when they explain the media logic. “Format is 1) how material is organized, 2) the style in which it is presented, 3) the focus or emphasis on particular characteristics of behavior, 4) and the grammar of media communication” (Altheide and Snow 1979, 10). Different formats or working procedures that are applied in different media may constitute relatively different media logic, but still they have coherent basic logic behind them which is described as: “rationale, emphasis, and orientation promoted by media production, processes, and message that even trends to be evocative, encapsulated, highly thematic, familiar to audiences, and easy to use” (Altheide 2004, 294). However, they distinguish format and form in order to better make sense of the concept of logic. Simmel maintains that “forms are procedural strategies used to guide behavior and to develop particular kinds of cultural content” (Lundby 2009, 108). However, main aspects of format could be “selection, organization, presentation of experience and information” (Lundby 2009, 103).

As I mentioned different kinds of media have their own logic in terms of distinguishable format they have. Especially when new technological and economic mechanisms emerge, it transforms the features of media landscape at large and the media logic in particular (Dijck and Poell 2013, 5). Therefore, in the next section, the focus will be on the introduction of the emerging social media platforms and their logic.
3.1.2. Social media

Before introducing any logic behind social media, I think it is definitely necessary to understand what social media really is. Jose Van Dijk and Thomas Poell (2013, 5) quote in “Understanding Social Media Logic” that social media can be roughly referred to as a “group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” By Web2.0 Fuchs defines it as “it is a techno-social system of communication. Networked information technologies are used as medium that allows humans to interact, for example, e-mail, chat, or discussion forums” (Fuchs 2010, 789). However, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 59) make a further clarification of social media by discussing the definition through referring to two fundamental concepts, Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. They also suggest that it is important to look back and investigate where social media come from and to go into details about what social media include (ibid, 60).

The first era of social media appeared almost 20 years ago, when Bruce and Susan Abelson created a social networking site called Open Diary, which gathers online diary writers into one community (ibid). And this was followed by the emergence of MySpace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004 (ibid).

There are two basic concepts that will modify social media. They refer the first one as Web 2.0, by which they consider it as an ideological and technological foundation for the evolution of social media (ibid, 61). They explain that this term first used in 2004 and, similar to Fuchs’ definition, it is described as a platform on which content and applications are created and modified by massive amount of users as well as software developers in a participatory and collaborative way through utilizing World Wide Web, instead of just being created and published by individuals (ibid). Furthermore, they emphasize a set of technical functionalities that are the basis for Web 2.0’s functioning, for instances, Adobe Flash (a popular method for adding animation, interactivity, and audio/video streams to web pages) and so on (ibid).
According to the authors, the second concept, User Generated Content (UGC) can be described as “the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users” (ibid, 61). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2007) points out several benchmarks to be considered as User Generated Content:

Firstly, it needs to be published either on a publicly accessible website or on a social networking site accessible to a selected group of people; secondly, it needs to show a certain amount of creative effort; and finally, it needs to have been created outside of professional routines and practices. The first condition excludes content exchanged in e-mails or instant messages; the second, mere replications of already existing content (e.g., posting a copy of an existing newspaper article on a personal blog without any modifications or commenting);

All in all, they come to a conclusion that “social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (ibid).

Another important work introduced by Kaplan and Haenlein is the classification of social media. To understand what social media refer to specifically is the basis for understanding the logic behind social media. Different social media platforms may affect the way how they constitute social media logic. Therefore, I think it is necessary to firstly display the underlying frameworks that the authors use for categorizing social media.

In order to reach such a classification scheme, the authors rely on the theories mainly in two dimensions. The first dimension is the social presence theory and media richness theory (ibid). Firstly, social presence refers to “the acoustic, visual, and physical contact that can be achieved” (ibid). Social presence is affected by the intimacy (interpersonal vs. mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs. synchronous). Mediated intimacy (e.g., telephone conversation) is seen as lower degree in social
presence than interpersonal intimacy (e.g., face-to-face discussion) (ibid). Similarly, asynchronous immediacy (e.g., e-mail) conveys lower social presence than synchronous immediacy (e.g., live chat) (ibid). They claim that media differ in the degree of social presence, and “the higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that communication partners have on each other’s behavior” (ibid).

Secondly, media richness theory, which is closely related to social presence theory, is based on the assumption that any communication aims at to make uncertainty become certain and eliminate the equivocality through its richness (ibid).

Richer media were those with a greater language variety (the ability to convey natural language rather than just numeric information), a greater multiplicity of cues (the number of ways in which information could be communicated such as the tone of voice), a greater personalization (ability to personalize the message), and more rapid feedback (ibid).

Thus various social media platforms differ in terms of degree of social presence occurred in it and its media richness. According to Table 1, blog and collaborative projects such as Wikipedia are regarded as relatively low social presence and media richness, while virtual social world (e.g., Second Life) and Virtual game worlds, for instance World of Warcraft are considered as possessing higher social presence and media richness.

The second dimension of the classification is self-presentation and self-disclosure. Self-presentation refers to that people tend to control impression the others have on them (ibid, 62). On one hand, people control their image through influencing other in order to gain rewards, for instance, build a good impression in front of future girlfriend. On the other hand, people incline to establish an image that is consistent with their personal identity (ibid). Creating a Facebook account and managing it is driven by the intention to present the self to others. Additionally, the accomplishment of self-presentation cannot be apart from the process of self-disclosure, which means the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information (ibid). However, Jan Van
Dijk in his book *The Network Society* further modified this dimension. He claims that the scheme of classification can be a “focus of exchange in the social media: this can be the individual sending of messages to others without necessarily receiving feedback or this can be a collective of two or more people exchanging messages in order to get things return” (Van Dijk 2012, 180). He mentions, blogs and microblogs, like Twitter, are definitely an individual call for attention, but it might not be noticed by others (ibid). In contrast, he gives an example of collective social media, for instance knowledge networks (e.g. Wikipedia) are dedicated to work together through both consume and create the content, not necessarily excessively focus on self-disclosure and gain attention. Therefore, original typology of social media by Kaplan and Haenlein, which can be clearly displayed in the following Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure</strong></td>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td>Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)</td>
<td>Content communities (e.g., YouTube)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1 Classification of Social Media**

### 3.1.3. Social media logic

Emergence of social media provided such a new environment in which user-generated contents are exchanged with the help of various web technologies. These changes bring a new set of technological, economic, and socio-cultural mechanisms, which Jose van Dijck and Thomas Poell refer as social media logic. Social media logic is different from mass media logics, because they are considered as using different strategies and tactics which are based on alternative technologies and economic lineage (Van Dijck and Poell 2013, 5). They claim that social media logic, on the one
hand, mingles with already existing mass media logic, on the other hand, it also creates new elements and altering established mechanisms (ibid). In such a new media landscape, rules of social interactions have been changed (ibid), due to its social media logics.

Van Dijck and Poell (2013, 5) define that “social media logic refers to the processes, principles, and practices through which these platforms process information, news, and communication, and more generally, how they channel social traffic.” They state that there are four grounding elements to describe how this logic functions: programmability, popularity, connectivity and datafication (ibid). However, in this study, the last element-datafication-will not be taken into consideration, because of the absence of its clear linkage with the realm of the study. In the next sections, the other three elements will be explained in details.

**Programmability**

According to Van Dijck and Poell, programmability can be defined as: “the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users’ creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, may in turn influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform” (Van Dijck and Poell 2013, 5). The presence of user-generated contents is closely related to the logic of social media. Unlike mass media, the logic of social media has been changed from one-way traffic to two-way traffic (ibid). In traditional mass media, content is generated by central media personal, like journalist, or TV program designer, while in social media platforms, the creation of content is more or less shifted to end-user of the Internet. Users have been democratized to decide what they are going to create, in terms of their aim or preference.

Van Dijck and Poell emphasize two elements that are grounded in this logic. The first one is the technology that is prerequisite for the practice of different online activities. By technology they illustrate that it is a kind of computer code, data, algorithms, protocols, interfaces, and the platform organizations that are useful for programming
Algorithm means sets of coded instructions. However, it goes beyond just being that, but it helps to lead to different kinds of relational activities, such as liking, sharing, recommending, favoriting, and so on (ibid). According to David Beer, programmers steer user experiences, content, and user relations through algorithmic settings (ibid).

The authors argue that actually the logic of programmability is the combination of crowdsourcing principle of social media and editorial values of mass media (ibid). In traditional mass media editorial strategy is regarded a part of programming through its selection, juxtaposition, and promotion of certain content (ibid). However, now these processes are not only practiced by central agencies, but instead it is more likely transferred to each internet users to participate in control and shape of content (ibid). For example, social media users can massively share and retweet or like particular content and decide its trending (ibid). Being a central element of social media logic, along with other types of logics, it is influencing the advertising strategies, public relations, activism and other public discourses (ibid).

**Popularity**

By popularity they mean that “each platform has its distinct mechanisms for boosting popularity of people, things, or ideas, which is measured mostly in quantified terms. For example, Facebook’s Like-scores automatically select emotive and positive evaluations of topics, rather than asking for complex assessments” (Van Dijck and Poell 2013, 7)

When logic of programmability brings the right for Internet users to create their own content, popularity enables them to prioritize these contents. Compared to mass media, in early years, social media are considered as more egalitarian and democratic, because users have equal right to participate and contribute to content (ibid, 6). However, special techniques on different social media, like count of sharing or liking on Facebook, provide them chance to boost some particular information over another. Facebook’s Like-scores automatically choose emotive and positive evaluations,
however they are not necessarily assessing it in more complex manner (ibid, 7). Twitter or Weibo (Chinese Twitter) has also most popular topics or hashtags for measuring “aggregated popularity or influence” (ibid). Corporations intend to find a way to promote their popularity or ranking mechanisms to reinforce their value and influence their target population (ibid).

The difference between social media logic and mass media logic is that social media measure popularity as well as influence and manipulate the ranking through the means (ibid, 7). This is crucial for online promotion when they lure Internet users to push particular content in the frontline and create such a trending (ibid). A specific Facebook or Twitter platform owner can make use of the popularity ranking to promote commercial, public or charity causes (ibid). For instance, there are some celebrities on Chinese Twitter, who call for the help for the children who need organ donation. The celebrities usually have a great amount of followers, and their posts are immediately viewed and share by those users. Van Dijck and Poell claim that: “it is exactly the export of social media popularity mechanisms to other social or commercial environments that proves the efficacy of its logic in challenging existing social hierarchies or unsettling discursive orders” (ibid).

**Connectivity**

In traditional mass media, connectedness refers to that media organizations link content to citizens or connect advertisers to consumers (Van Dijck and Poell 2013, 8) However, the emergence of social media modifies the old form of connectedness, instead the logic of connectivity in social media refers to:

- the socio-technical affordance of networked platforms to connect (self-made) content to user activities and advertiser. More precisely, in a connective ecosystem of social media, the “platform apparatus” always mediates users’ activities and defines how connections are taking shape, even if users themselves can exert considerable influence over the contribution of content (ibid).
Connectivity goes beyond the concept of “spredibility” which emphasizes the importance of social connections among individuals” (ibid).

In “spredibility”, the focus is on audience itself, rather than considering the power of internet (ibid). Comparatively, connectivity emphasizes the mutual shaping of users, platforms, advertisers, and generally speaking, online performative environment (ibid). Instead of reaching more natural geographic or demographic connectedness, social media push automated connectivity with the help of online tools (ibid). The connectivity shapes relatively loosely bounded social networks which is called by Barry Wellman and colleagues “networked individualism” (ibid). They suggest that in this form of sociality individuals directly link with other people with whom they are willing to involve in relationship with common interest (ibid). This point is further illustrated by Jakob Svensson and Ulrike Klinger as “like-mindedness” (Svensson and Klinger 2014, 17). They claim that users join the networks of like-minded others (ibid). Individuals have their own preference in terms of political, social or cultural realm, and on social media people gather based on their interest. This element increases the possibilities of socializing, because “digital technology makes it easier for the like-minded to socialize from their home environments but over great distances” (Svensson 2011, 111). With like-mindedness users create their own online networks and groups.

W. Lance Bennet and Alexandra Segerberg emphasize a concept of connective action which is primarily notable in political movements. They claim that “at the core of logic of connective action is the recognition of digital media as organizing agents” (2012, 752). The network does not necessarily need a strong organizational control or collective identity, but social technologies or social media platforms is functioning as organizing agent (Van Dijck and Poell 2013, 8).

Another embodiment of connectivity is the mechanisms of deep personalization and network customization, which refer to “online content calibration based on assumptions about individual user’s needs and platform owner’s or advertiser’s interest” (ibid, 9). For
example, certain types of shoe commercials appear on one’s Facebook page, if this person constantly clicks online shoe stores. Thus like-mindedness, logic of connective action and personalization can be the embodiment of connectivity.

All in all, internet users, especially social media users, have become a part of the mediatization process that is influenced by different affordances and functionalities of social media platforms. This process can be further explained by the concept of social media logic which is the underlying mechanisms in this process, such as programmability, popularity and connectivity. Our everyday life is influenced by the logic when we tend to rely on the digital media and to initiate our interaction on the platforms. The action seems to be technologized. In this respect, humanitarian communication is also changed due to the digital technologies. Therefore, in the next section, I will introduce the concept of post-humanitarianism which is described by Chouliaraki (2010) as a new form of humanitarian communication.

3.2. Post-humanitarianism

One of the breakthroughs in recent humanitarian communication studies is Chouliaraki’s theorization of post-humanitarianism. According to Chouliaraki, humanitarian communication has been receiving critiques in the recent decade (Chouliaraki 2010, 108). While the shock effect appeal was criticized for dehumanizing the sufferer, recent topic lays in the discussion of commodification of humanitarian appeal (ibid). Inspired by these debates, Chouliaraki carries out a study titled as “Post-humanitarianism: humanitarian communication beyond politics of pity” to look at in what way different appealing methods are forming the moral agency of the public towards distant suffering (ibid). Her findings eventually contribute to theorizing post-humanitarianism as a new paradigm in contemporary humanitarian communication.

The problem with contemporary humanitarianism is always associated with the relationship between humanitarianism and politics (Chouliaraki 2010, 108). As Boltaniski (1999) argues that the problem and complains mainly originate from that
humanitarianism has become a means to achieved political goals and interest, while deviated from its essential value by raising the public’s moral agency and alleviate the suffer of distant others.

In the light of these arguments, Chouliaraki begins her discussions by illustrating critiques on different forms of appealing in humanitarian communication. This mainly includes two types of appeal: one is critique on “shock effect” which aims to evoke audience’s indignation and guilt; the other one is “positive image” appeal where the focus is mainly on arousing the public’s gratitude and empathy toward the vulnerable others (Chouliaraki 2010, 109). Although both types of aesthetics are designed to call for action, they are not free from the challenges of ethical concerns (ibid).

Firstly, “shock effect” appeals can be seen as an old and traditional form of humanitarian communication in which harsh reality of sufferers are shown to the audience (Chouliaraki 2010, 110). For instance, there is a famous photograph which won Pulitzer prize in 1994, depicting a hungry child crawling in United Nation’s food camp during Sudan famine. Such photographs are not unusual in humanitarian campaigns when the humanitarian NGOs intend to earn publics’ support by depicting and exposing humans’ vulnerable condition to its extreme status. The images are usually individualizing characteristics of the sufferer, for instance their age, sex, social background, and in doing so, eventually present how desperate they are to escape from the harsh reality (ibid). They are usually “victim-oriented” in which distant sufferer’s life condition is as an object of Westerners’ contemplation and reason to act (ibid). However, behind the scene, as Chouliaraki argues, it is actually social relationship that creates a sharp contrast between misfortune of distant others vis a vis well-being of western public (ibid). This is also termed as a kind of complicity which mobilize the public morality towards the appeal. That is to say, primarily, this is historical complicity in which the images remind the west of their colonial past that “disfranchised” the distant others through imperialism (Chouliaraki 2010, 111). This eventually evokes feeling of collective guilt and sense of responsibility to act (ibid). On the other hand, the complicity triggers a feeling of shame when the public is aware
of their failure to help (ibid). The complicity, as a result, changes our feeling of guilt and shame to more explicit form of emotion—indignation (ibid).

Although humanitarian professionals endeavor to mobilize the audience through “shock effect” appeals, they eventually could not be free from criticism and public’s unwillingness to act. Specifically, the “shock effect” imaginary is challenged by the concept of compassion fatigue as we mentioned earlier (Chouliaraki 2010, 112). This is simply a feeling of reluctance because the audience has been repeatedly informed of the cause, so that they are not interested any more. Chouliaraki further classifies compassion fatigue into two categories: “bystander” effect and “boomerang” effect (ibid). The first type mainly involves the fact that “shock effect” images has the risk of making public feel powerless and hopeless to change the situation of distant suffers, so instead public just simply chose not to think about it (ibid). On the other hand, “boomerang” effect is mainly associated with public’s resentment towards campaigners and their negative message about the suffering, because they make them feel uncomfortable about the cause (ibid, 113).

Although Chouliaraki’s theorization “shock effect” appeals as well as classification of compassion fatigue mainly based on the empirical evidence of traditional media, I think it is still of importance in the realm of social media studies. Because in contemporary humanitarian communication, which more likely utilizes social media platforms, we can still notice “shock effect” images and videos circulating among the audience in social media. Therefore, I choose to take “shock effect” message into my consideration as well, to see how this form of appeal are reflecting or affecting the new form of humanitarian communication, namely humanitarianism on social media.

Contrary to “shock effect” appeals, a reformative “positive image” campaigns have emerged and become a relatively new form of appeal in humanitarian communication (ibid, 112). What differs “positive image” appeal from the previous “shock effect” images are that it refuses to represent bare reality and vulnerability of the distant others, instead its major concern is to show sufferer’s “agency” and “dignity” (ibid).
In addition to this illustration, Chouliaraki summarizes two major characteristics of this type of appeal: 1) it moves the attention to individual sufferer and depicts them as a participant of the campaign (for instance, a sufferer actively takes part in a development aid campaign); 2) it also focuses on an individual benefactor by assuring that specific donors can make a difference in changing the situation (ibid). In doing so, “positive image” appeals aspire to evoke spectators’ sense of “empathy, tender-heartedness, and gratitude” (ibid).

Through this bilateral relationship, “positive image” appeal encourages sufferers to participate. Most importantly, this arouses a conception of common humanity among both sufferer and benefactor, which means, although the distant others are not depicted as the vulnerable and powerless suffers (ibid), we actually can help them through our shared sense of justice and humanity. This eventually works to empower the public and encourage their moral agency.

Just like “shock effect” campaign, the “positive image” appeal received criticism. The critique exists in a form of complicity as well (Chouliaraki 2010, 113). Although “positive image” campaigns are relatively successful, it is yet difficult to maintain the pace because marketization is seen as the motivation behind the campaigns (ibid). Except for this, some of the NGOs are claimed to serve for local regimes, so this discourages the public to positively react to the appeals (ibid). Additionally, regardless of the effort by the NGOs, lack of local infrastructure also limits the development of projects (ibid).

However, most importantly, “positive image” appeals bring a kind of social relationship between sufferer and benefactor, which centralizes sense of gratitude and fellow-feeling (Chouliaraki 2010, 113). The former one lies in an unequal relationship where receiver feels grateful towards the gift from the donor, but at the same time are bound to an obligation and duties towards the benefactor (ibid). The latter one implies that the donor’s generosity is actually serving their own fellow feeling (ibid). As a result, it creates a sense of otherness of the sufferer as Chouliaraki states, “positive
image” does encourage the vulnerable to seek their dignity and power, but at the same time, it eventually portraits them as “the others” from Western standpoint (ibid).

Departing from the critique, “positive image” also brings some potential risk to the humanitarian communication. Primarily, it also enhances the compassion fatigue when the public conceive it as a sign of “the problem has already been solved” and this makes them reluctant to act (Chouliaraki 2010, 114). Secondly, “positive image” can render the public to see the distant suffers as average human without any struggle to address (ibid). This eliminates their motivation to act. Thirdly, there is a risk of suspicion on the representation and the messages leading them to a question “how do I know this is real” (ibid). All the critical concerns have further lead to theorization and re-addressing of contemporary humanitarian communication. So in the next few sections, I will continue to illustrate the shift towards the new paradigm, post humanitarianism.

Considering the above critiques, Chouliaraki (2010, 114) argues that humanitarian communication is inherently unstable. As we may see from previous discussions, humanitarian communication exists in a form of complicity and contradiction (ibid). Rather than fully understanding the struggle of distant suffers, we indulge ourselves in a narcissistic practice of fellow-feeling and problematic self-contentment (ibid). As a result, a new type of humanitarian communication emerged where aesthetic quality and moral agency have fundamentally changed (ibid). The following paragraphs will further explain the two perspectives.

First of all, according to Chouliaraki aesthetic quality has centered around a concept of “multi-modal juxtaposition” which implies previous photorealism is changed to a combination of different genres (Chouliaraki 2010, 115). For instance, it is a mixture of visual form and content, or combination of verbal and visual images, or even textual and physical space (ibid).

However, they still utilize a form of photorealism (ibid). What is different from traditional form of photorealism is that authenticity of distant others is largely
diminished (ibid). The message no longer reflects the reality, but instead it creates a hyper realism in which the sufferers are represented in terms of designer’s imagination.

The second aspect when theorizing post-humanitarianism is moral agency. Chouliaraki claims that moral agency is embedded in the following two features: 1) technologization of action and 2) de-emotionalization of the cause (Chouliaraki 2010, 117). By technologization of action she basically means that internet simplifies the action for humanitarianism (ibid). Particularly, the mode of engagement has been changed because the audiences are encouraged to just click on the mouse to donate or sign on a petition and so on (ibid). She argues that the simplicity mainly inhibits in two dimensions: the first key dimension is that internet has become an important means to do something for the distant others, but at the same time, humanitarian sensibility does not persist any longer (ibid). Instead, “this no-time engagement with technology suggest that expectations of effortless immediacy, the most prominent element of contemporary consumer culture, are increasingly populating in the moral imagination of humanitarianism” (ibid). On the other hand, the second dimension in simplification is lack of justification in the humanitarian appeals (ibid). That is to say, technologizaiton of action skips explaining why we need to take action on the particular appeal (ibid). But instead, it put the focus on organizational branding at the expense of evoking universal morality (ibid). As a result of that, humanitarian organizations “replaces moralistic exhortation with brand recognition, thereby moving from an explicit marketing of suffering as a cause towards an implicit investment in the identity of the humanitarian agency itself”, and in this way they abandoned the “visual realism, grand emotion and the question of why” (ibid, 118).

Except for technologization of action, another key characteristic of post-humanitarianism is de-emotionalization of the cause. As Chouliaraki discusses emotion is prerequisite for any action towards humanitarian appeals (ibid, 118). While traditional humanitarianism communication is based on guilt and indignation or gratitude and empathy, contemporary post-humanitarian style mostly refers to “objects of contemplation to be reflected upon” (ibid). She mainly concludes the
following dispositions in contemporary humanitarianism: 1) irony as a discourse in which public do not try to understand the life of distant suffers, but focus their taken-for-granted habit in developed world (ibid). It is an inclination towards the contemplation of the contrast between third world and the developed countries (ibid). Therefore, it is a kind of self-reflexivity which invites us to a suppressed guilt and feeling of injustice towards the victims (ibid). 2) dispassionate emotional disposition which brought up by digital games in the absence of rhetoric of justice. As Chouliaraki discusses, in some campaigns, the audience is asked to sign a petition after watching videos or pictures. It aims to awake audience by stressing that they have power to make changes (ibid). But it is not a heroism like in the past which torn down tyranny, instead it is just a dispassionate emotion towards hyper-reality (ibid).

All of these characteristics lead to a sort of moral agency which encourages low-intensity affective regimes “that insinuate the classic constellations of emotion towards suffering but do not quite inspire or enact them” (ibid). The emotion of guilt and heroism, according to Chouliaraki, are not seen as a politics of pity and collective commitment, but as “de-contextualized fragments of such a narrative that render the psychological world of the spectator a potential terrain of self-inspection” (ibid).

In summary, Chouliaraki (2010, 119) defines post-humanitarian communication as “textual games, low intensity emotional regimes and a technological imagination of instant gratification accompanied with no justification.” Central to this new form of humanitarian communication is that it marginalizes the universal morality which was seen as a motivation for humanitarian engagement, on the contrary spectator nowadays has their own judgement and justification for an action (ibid). It is primarily caused by the disconnection between seeing the suffering and feeling for suffering, and the taking a necessary and meaningful action towards the distant suffers (ibid). This form of communication is characterized by Chouliaraki as a kind of commodification in which humanitarianism now obeys the rules the market logic that does not necessarily aims at a social change and resolving injustice, but renders humanitarianism instant and unsustainable engagement (ibid). The difference between
traditional form of emotion-oriented appeal and post-humanitarian appeal is that the former one relies on moral universalism in which everyone voluntarily feel for and do something towards the distant suffering, while the latter one refers to reflexive particularization in which “emotional wealth of one agent comes at the expense of another” (ibid). This is evident in both of “shock effect” and “positive image” appeals in which the former one approaches justice through dehumanizing the powerless suffer, while the latter “appropriate the sufferer in the world like ‘ours’” (Chouliaraki 2010, 120). However according to her, none of the campaigns could maintain a long term engagement from the public (ibid). Hence, she acknowledges that current humanitarianism relies excessively on an act of representation rather than moral response from the audience (ibid). And this implies that compassion fatigue actually is not caused by increasing humanitarian suffering, but by the variety of discourse which constantly invites us to an action (ibid). Considering the theories above, in next section I will present the methodology to find out the empirical evidence for the research questions.

4. Methodology

This chapter mainly describes the methodological construction of this research project. As we can see from previous chapters the study is primarily to explore the relationship between the social media logic and the expectation of the particular humanitarian aid. In addition, it also aims to find out if humanitarianism on social media reflects any characteristics of post-humanitarianism. In order to conduct an in-depth investigation for this subject, I choose case study as my methodological approach. To extract meaningful information from the case, qualitative data collection method, structured and semi-structured interviews, is implied for the study.

4.1. Case study

According to Yin (1991, 23) a case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of
evidence are used.” The reason why I choose case study as the methodological approach is that the research primarily focuses on how humanitarian organization are making use of the social media platforms under its hidden logics. It is a kind of real-life context and natural setting that needs a detailed description from the informant, so that to explore the specific dynamics of the new form of communication process. Secondly, it will be rather difficult to see how the new form of communication is influencing the outcome of the humanitarian project without looking at a specific case. Humanitarianism on social media is an emerging phenomenon, however influencing forces behind the phenomena is rather abstract, so it compels me to look at a specific case as a unit of analysis. Thirdly, case study is suitable for conducting an in-depth analysis (Sarantacos, 2005, 212). The study strives to analyze the utilization of social media platforms and the outcome of this utilization. Most importantly, the study aspires to find out how the logic of social media is affecting the process and to see whether we can call the communication as a sign of post-humanitarian style of communication. All of the concerns need an in-depth investigation of a case in order to better understand the situation.

The case I choose for the project is a refugee children program organized by humanitarian organization called Clowner Utan Gränser (CUG) in Sweden which is a chapter organization of Clowns Without Borders International. Clowns Without Boarders International (CWBI) Federation is an international, independent, and non-profit association which was founded in Spain in 1993 when Tortell Poltrona, a clown from Spain was asked by the children at a school in Barcelona to go to the Istraian Peninsula in Croatia to perform for refugee children (CWB-international 2016). Over more than 20 years, Clowns Without Boarders International is made up of 12 Clowns Without Boarders national chapter organizations including the chapter in Sweden—Clowner Utan Gränser (CWB-international 2016).

As an affiliated organization of CWBI, Clowner Utan Gränser was founded in 1996. The mission of the organization is to spread laughter, joy and hope. They send clowns and artists for children and communities affected by war, conflict and other crises
around the world; they use humor and play to uphold human dignity and as a way to give children and adults the opportunity and hope to develop; in Sweden, the mission is to increase awareness of and commitment to people who are in vulnerable situations around the world (Skratt 2016). In 2015, they worked in 16 countries and brought laughter and joy to more than 130,000 children (ibid).

The particular humanitarian project I choose for this study is a refugee children project which is divided into three sub-projects. However, the three projects developed over time and keep the same mission and goals (Informant 1). 1) *For the Syrian Children*. The project started in 2012 and CUG worked in Syria’s neighboring countries Jordan and Lebanon; Through performances, workshops and games, they remind Syrian refugee children that they can never lose hope for life (Skratt 2016).

![Figure 1](image)
2) *Welcome to Sweden.* This project started in 2014 when more and more refugees came to Sweden (Skratt 2016). CUG decided to make them feel welcome in Sweden (Informant 1). The most important event in this project is that they arranged Dream Gala which is a magical performance held in Dansens Hus in Stockholm. By inviting the refugee children to the circus show, the organization makes them feel as equally important children in the world (Informant 1).

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 2*

3) *Love for refugee children.* In 2015, the refugee crisis became more urgent. CUG decided to start a campaign in Greece and welcome people who come to Europe and give them energy and hope (Skratt 2016).
The reason why I choose this organization and this particular project is primarily because the organization is relatively large in scope which includes chapter organizations in 12 countries in the world, which means it has relatively large audience around the world, and they are possibly the ones who actively participate in the communication on social media platforms. Secondly, the reason behind choosing the particular refugee children project is because world is currently facing an increasing refugee crisis. Therefore, dedicating to refugee crisis seems to be a main focus of recent humanitarian organizations, which I see it as a typical case of recent humanitarianism.

4.2. Data collection methods

This study employs qualitative research methods in which structured and semi-structured interview have been chosen as data collection method. Semi-structured interview lies between structured and unstructured interviews (Sarantakos 2005, 269). Structured interview is based on structured questionnaires which are verbally presented by the interviewer (ibid, 268). It requires the respondent strictly adhere to the order and wording of the question and it is usually used in quantitative research methods (ibid). On the contrary unstructured interviews consist of number of open-ended question in which order and working can be changed.
if needed (ibid). The interviewer is free to illustrate, reformulate the question at will in the context (ibid).

4.2.1. Semi-structured interview with communication officer

The first interview is a semi-structured and face-to-face interview with the communication officer of CUG, who is responsible for publicizing a variety of projects on social media platforms and communicating with public regarding the campaigns.

The interview questions are formulated in 5 sections. Most of the questions are open-ended questions. When respondent needs further explanation of a question or a concept, I provided the interviewee more detailed information about the question. In the first section, I asked the informant to give me an overview of the case. This basically includes questions regarding the aim, core value and progress of the project. This is an important consideration, because before evaluating the outcome of particular campaign, it is necessary to understand the project in details, especially what the aim and mission of the project are. In the second section, I would like to explore what social media platforms the organization is using for the projects. Most importantly, the ranking of these platforms in terms of importance and preference are also taken into consideration. Different social media platforms have different settings and functions, which might differ in terms of connectivity, popularity and programmability, in another words, logic of social media. The reason behind the choice is also a main concern to understand why they choose the specific platform over another. The third section focuses on the concept of engagement. Understanding spectator’s moral agency towards the vulnerable others cannot be apart from the discussion of action which is embodied in the context of engagement (Madiabou 2012, 252). Therefore, based on three dimensions of engagement- understanding/awareness, talk and action (ibid)- I attempt to discover what kind of engagement the humanitarian practitioner expects from audience for this campaign. Only looking at their expectation will not be enough for evaluation of the success of the campaign. So I will also focus on what engagement has occurred after they publicize the campaign on
social media platforms. At last, the interviewee is asked to evaluate the effect of the actual online engagement compared to her expectation. The forth section focuses on the three domains of social media logic, which are programmability, popularity and connectivity. This is the central part of the project, which eventually I aspire to discover the relationship between the social media logic and outcome of the campaign. The last section is designed for understanding the respondent’s overall view and evaluation upon the expectation of the campaign and their social media strategies. At the same time the respondent is also asked to compare social media and the traditional media to see how much value social media contributes the success of the campaign.

4.2.2. Structured interview with volunteer

In addition to this, I also conducted interview with a volunteer in the project. As a participant of the humanitarian campaign, the voice of volunteers should also be taken into consideration, because they are the spectators of the distant sufferings and they contribute to the dynamic process of the humanitarian communication on social media, as well as the success of the campaign. The underlying logic and structure of social media could be a factor which influence the relationship between spectator and the distant others, and most importantly, to address the suffering of vulnerable. The interview questions are divided into two parts. The first part is to investigate their understanding of the campaign to see whether it is in line with the expectation of the campaign organizers. The second part focuses on their online participation. This part contributes to digging out the interactive process between public and campaign organizers on social media.¹

4.2.3. Semi-structured interview with random social media users

Except from the two interviews above, I also conducted 4 semi-structured interviews with random social media users in Stockholm University. The reason behind this is to see what is the random social media users’ response when they see the posts about humanitarianism on the platforms, as well as to see what they will do about it. The

¹ Please see Appendix B.
interview questions are mainly about what their general view is about the humanitarian posts on social media. I also showed them the refugee children programme mentioned above and asked their opinion regarding the campaigns when they first see them on social media. If anything is unclear about the questions and answers, I tried to explain more or asked the respondent to illustrate more about his/her answers. The specific questions will be presented in appendix C.

In the next chapter, I will present the data I gathered from the respondents and conduct an analysis of the data.

5. Data and analysis

This chapter contains a detailed presentation of interview questions as well as the empirical data from the interviews.

5.1. Interview with communication officer of the humanitarian organization

5.1.1. Overview of the project

- Please describe the project

According the informant, the refugee children project consists of three separate sub-projects, as I listed in the methodology part, which includes For Syrian Children (started in 2012), Welcome to Sweden (started in 2014) and Love for Refugee Children (started 2015). Even though it has been divided into three different campaigns, they convey same message and overlap each other over the time, which bring laughter and hope for the refugee children. The most ongoing project right now is Welcome to Sweden (Informant 1).

- What is the aim and core value of the project?

Primarily, the aim of the project “is to create some engagement from the public for these people who live in vulnerability” through the online followers in Sweden (Informant 1). However, to create the engagement, of course, they need to firstly inform the public (Informant 1). Therefore, the aim of the project is to inform, to call
for engagement and to ask for donation in order to continue their job (Informant 1). When it comes to core value of the project and the organization, the informant responses that

What we are trying to be is different from other humanitarian organizations. Most of the organization or media often shows the darkness or tragedy. But our goal is to show the hopeful side of it so we all can engage in. This is our core value when we do all the work for refugee children and the core message that we send to the audience when we call for their support (Informant 1).

What we can see from here is that “positive image” of the vulnerable others is seen as an important information to trigger engagement from audience. Most of the organizations portray the negative side of the distant others, which might cause compassion fatigue. So the organization not necessarily prefers to convey negative information as their key strategy to call for action. The “positive image” can make the people more likely to engage in the activity.

- What do you specifically do for these campaigns?

According to the informant, they always work with their artists (volunteers) who go in the field and perform the circus show the refugee children (Informant 1). But they are also asked to give CUG an update of the activity in text, pictures or movies (Infromant 1).

A lot of our materials are pictures. We work a lot with direct stories. The artists write us and tell us about the meeting with the children. Tell us about how the laughter can create better environment for them. Or we try to get good quotes from the people. It is normal post with pictures (Infromant 1).

As for Welcome to Sweden campaign which is the most ongoing project among them, they also organized an activity called Dream Gala (ibid).

We had Dream Gala four years now in Stockholm in Dansens Hus when we
invited around 1000 refugee children who come to Sweden for Circus show and activities. What we do then is that we sell tickets on social media, but if you buy a ticket you cannot go for yourself, but instead you buy it for a refugee child from Syria. We try to design it and we try to post it online, so you can buy and be part of it (Informant 1).

As we can see from the answers, the campaigns are carried out with help of social media platforms. And it seems that the practitioner is positive about the role of social media platforms, especially for the Dream Gala event.

- **What is the progress of the campaigns right now?**

The interviewee replies that, since 2012 when they started For Syrian Children project, they have got a lot of donations throughout the campaign (Informant 1).

When the situation became more and more urgent in Greece last year around August while more and more people came, we didn’t have big donors. So two of our artists created an event on Facebook to help us to go to Greece and in three days we gathered enough money to send the team. It has been successful when it comes to financial part. It is a lot of donations (Informant 1).

But still, the success is not only the financial part. She also mentions that they always set a goal for specific project and post when it comes to getting Likes on social media platforms. That means they usually expect to get 10% of total likes of the page of organization when they create a new post each time (Informant 1). And they have managed to do when it comes to the refugee project (ibid).

As we can see from above, it is evident that donation has been big part of the organization’s success through utilizing the social platforms. This can play a crucial role for the campaign, because making donation could primarily guarantee the organization could continue with the work. Except for that, obtaining likes from the audience probably also a sign of getting recognition from the audience.
• **Who are engaging in the activities?**

According to the respondent, the major participants of the campaigns in offline environment are volunteers who are the artist and musicians of the circus team (Informant 1). Except for this, there are some volunteers who helped to welcome the children and arranged them in the venue for the shows. But they do not necessarily have some volunteers who go into the street and asking for donation (ibid).

As for the online environment, they have many followers, for instance on Facebook 11558 people have liked the page (Clowner utan Gränser Facebook Page). They are the ones who are liking, sharing, and commenting. According to the informant, most of the people engage online (Informant 1).

**5.1.2. Social media strategies**

• **Please list the social media platforms that you are using for the project and rank them in terms of importance or preference.**

The informant lists Facebook as their first choice, which is followed by Instagram. However, Twitter comes third and finally YouTube as their last choice.

• **Why would you rank them in this order?**

The primary reason for this is Facebook can create more engagement (Informant 1).

    Facebook is where our supporter or our donors are. So they are the most Facebook users who donate money and support us. They are in older age. They are parents, grandparents, teachers, basically people who work for children or have children. However, there are not so many younger people (Informant 1).

    Basically, the informant thinks they can reach more people on Facebook, which is more effective (Informant 1). However other platforms come second because they are not widely used in older age group.

This is one of the noteworthy findings in this research. Facebook comparing to other
social media platforms have relatively more functions, which, in my point of view, enable higher degree of programmability. For instance, Facebook allows posting more content, while Twitter restricts it only to 140 characters. As a result, Facebook enables the audience to freely express their ideas as well as post what they want without limitation. Higher degree of programmability could eventually leads to more online engagement from the audience. In addition to this, Facebook and other social media platforms could differ in terms of connectivity. For example, on Facebook, the public can freely create their own group for further discussion. However, on other platforms, like Twitter and Instagram, there hasn’t been any setting enable to create any group. Facebook, in this sense, is more likely to help the public and humanitarian practitioners to connect with each other, which I think could also play a vital role in mutual understanding and engagement.

- **What kind of content are you posting on these platforms (self-generated content or shares or else)?**

The respondent replies that they use the social media platforms in slightly different ways (Informant 1).

On Facebook, it is mostly our own created content, like our own pictures and stories from the field. But we also share content on Facebook, which is mainly bigger article about us from big newspapers, magazines, and sites, etc, for instance Dagens Nyheter. But mostly we post our own generated content (ibid).

On Instagram, they are only pictures from the field with artist and children, for example, they are trying to report directly where they are and what activity is going on (Infromant 1). So this is more or less a kind of instant report from the field.

However, on Twitter they prefer to share some content. They seldom post self-generated content except they think it necessary to post the schedule of the campaign sometimes (ibid). Lastly, on YouTube, they mainly post their own movies
from the field (ibid).

And as I mentioned earlier, 99% of the content are positive content according the informant.

5.1.3. Question of engagement

- **What kind of public engagement do you expect from the audience for these campaigns?**

According to the informant, the aim of the humanitarian campaign is to show spectators another perspective to look at the refugees and people who is in vulnerable situations (Informant 1). Current humanitarianism mostly depicts refuges as victims or threat (ibid). However, CUG wants to depict the refuges or the people who need help in a positive way. Hence, what they expect from the audience is initially to change the attitude after seeing what they do and reading their perspective (ibid).

If the audience have already had that idea, we just want them to make it stronger. After seeing or reading what we presented we would like them to take a stand for all, for human rights (ibid).

The primary goal is to give information to the public and then create engagement and finally ask for donation (ibid). The respondent states that the most important engagement they expect is at the awareness/understanding level, because it is a prerequisite for further engagement (ibid).

- **How do you define moral engagement from the audience?**

The informant thinks that there a lot of reports on TV or newspapers which shows the negative side of the world (Informant 1). However, the world needs hopefulness (ibid).

I think most of the people come to us and try to see the world in more positive way. So I think all people should stay positive. And I also think that a lot of people want to do something when the world looks like this. If the
people don’t want to donate money, they can share something on the internet. That means at least they did it and took a stand. It can still be a meaningful engagement (ibid).

When I asked if the engagement is enough, she replies that:

No. But it is absolutely a good thing because people at least take a stand, but we need people to do more and to take a step further. It can be in many ways, for example, donating money and volunteering (ibid).

Even though offline engagement, like donating is an important part for humanitarian campaigns, social media is still not powerful enough to trigger more offline actions. However, in order to do so they need to firstly work with awareness, which is realized by the help of social media (ibid).

- After posting the content on social media, what kind of reaction and engagement do you see from your followers?

According to the informant, people mostly like, comment and share things of the campaign on social media (Informant 1).

A lot of people have been with us for long time and they are commenting their love and they are mostly middle age. When we ask for their help like asking for donation for our campaign they are the ones who help and donate money to us. But not in the case if you ask quite often (ibid).

She took an example of a Facebook event in which they collected enough money to go to Greece. “supporters are super-engaged and almost throw money to us” (ibid). But she also claims that “it doesn’t happen so often, especially when the situation is awful everywhere in the world and many organizations are engaging in the same activity” (ibid).

Her answer implies that people is influenced by compassion fatigue when it comes to engagement. However, what is surprising to me is that, people are actually constantly
supporting the campaign, rather than instant sharing or liking on social media. But this is limited to the small scale of the public, which means most people like what they do, but just do not take step further. It is the limitation of online engagement (ibid).

- What is the contribution of the online engagement to the success of the campaign projects?

Initially, according to the informant, social media helps the organization to spread the information about this campaign (Informant 1).

For example, like in Welcome to Sweden, our volunteers went to refugee camps where refugees live when they are new in Sweden. The related staff or personal contacted us and ask us to come to them. So it helps us to reach out to the children. They have saved us a lot of work instead of we contact everybody in Sweden and introduce our offer, by saying “we can offer this and our volunteers can come to you”. We have a workshop on social media that we put our info on it, and our followers can share and spread it out… It has saved us a lot of effort (ibid).

Sharing of information creates new opportunities for the organization to establish connection with the public and other organization. In addition, it also helps to collect donation. Even though not often, it is helpful to obtain a financial support for the campaign as we can see from the previous Facebook event for going to Greece (ibid).

- Does your audience constantly engage in the activity or is it just short term engagement?

The informant replies that “our audience mostly stay with us for longer term. No people unlike or stop to follow. That’s positive thing” (Informant 1).

- Do you think the participants fully understand the core value of this campaign?

The informant states that the public might not fully understand the value or mission of
the project, until they go and feel the atmosphere by themselves (Informant 1).

Maybe they don’t understand it 100%, but when I see what they write and when they share and write about us I really feel like they understand the importance of laughter and welcoming people. Because they have been with us for longer period of time, so their knowledge has grown. And they have learnt to know us (ibid).

Except of this, direct post from the field also has a crucial impact on the understanding of the public. The informant replies that:

A lot of our post are direct post from the field, like pictures or stories. We sometimes post it when the artists are performing or sometimes maybe two days later. It is directly from the field, there are not too much administrative process going on in between. So the audience can feel like “if I give money I can see directly the effect of it.” So people can trust us when they donate money (Informant 1).

This implies that direct posts can increase the possibility for audience to understand the progress of the campaign and, in my point of view, increase the potential of engagement, because they can directly see the effect of the campaign.

5.1.4. Interviewee’s response and understanding of the humanitarian communication in the context of social media logic

*Programmability*

- **What function of social media platforms do you see most useful to trigger audience’s engagement (awareness, talk or action)? And what role does it play in the success of the campaign?**

The informant replies that function that enables them to create the content and post something about this campaign plays a vital role to create engagement (Informant 1). This is what most of the social media platforms have provided to the public, for instance, Facebook provides Internet user to post what they have in mind without
word limit. And also each post has enable the audience to comment and write feedback on the post.

When it comes to what they post using the function, the informant replies that we mainly work with evoking emotion of the audience. Even if it begins with sad stories like talking about child’s situation, we always end up with hopeful note. So when we write individual story that we tell about the child meeting with volunteer. It creates big impact (Informant 1).

That implies positive individual stories have been a powerful message on social media to evoke audience’s engagement. However, in addition to this, what surprise me most is that they also post something related to the global issues which they think creates big impact as well (Informant 1).

And if we post something like mostly happening right now in the world for example the conflict in South Sudan, it helps us to apply to the bigger situation. While some current issue is on the news all over the place and if we post something related to the big situation it triggers more engagement (Informant 1).

This is a noteworthy finding because it reflects that what the campaign organizers post can affect the public engagement and influence public, especially when they are part of the big environment and stay connected to big issues and rest of the world.

*Popularity*

- **What online content is most popular for this campaign?**

According to the respondent emotional pictures in which children laughing when they are meeting a clown for the first time are most popular; except for this personal stories have also gained most popularity amongst the audience (Informant 1). And also when the secretary general writes blog and takes a stand on political matter, that is also popular (Informant 1). This means that when the content is on individual level and in
details, it gets more attention from the public. And again, reflecting on a big situation or global issue can help to boost the popularity for the campaign itself or for the organizations.

- **Why do you think these content become popular?**

Firstly, emotional pictures and stories get popular because people are emotional in nature (Informant 1). When they see the post the picture on the website, it can create their imagination and sympathy. And social media has a powerful tool to gather the information on one site, this gains more attention from the public to start talking about it and probably to react to it.

In addition to this, the informant claims that “we try to connect to the world news. I think people read about it maybe on other sites and notice that we are talking about the same thing but from a different perspective. So they are interested in us” (Informant 1). Staying connected to current issue also boost the popularity of the campaign and the organization.

- **Did you use any other specific strategies to boost the popularity?**

According to the Informant, they usually plan the communication over the year, such as when they have UN day, Child Refugee Day or Child Convention day, they often react to that on social media, so they can be part of it and contribute to it (Informant 1). And also in doing so, they can get something on news media too (Informant 1). This is again that they would like to connect to rest of the world, and it helps a lot to gain attention from the audience.

- **Do you think popularity on social media influence the success of the campaign?**

The respondent answers that “Yes, absolutely, it plays an important role to the success” (Informant 1). Especially in spreading the message and gain attention from the audience, it has a vital role. And this eventually could increase awareness and create engagement.
Connectivity

- **Do you think you are connected to your audience?**

“We are very connected to our audience, volunteers and donors” (Informant 1). According to the interviewee, because they are often posting directly from the field, this increase the connectivity between them and the campaign participants (Informant 1).

- **What advantages and disadvantages (if any) of the connection do you see from the campaign?**

According to the respondent, since 2012 until now, CUG has become a forum where they can stand for human rights (Informant 1). She thinks that their audience know CUG tries to be positive while rest of the world fallen apart, so she believes others know how they think. And this is crucially important for the success of the campaign. Because connection creates understanding first, and also the exchange of ideas and information between the organization and the audience. This could eventually improve the work for the campaign.

- **Do you think it can create mutual trust? How?**

The informant replies that over the time they have grown to know them how they think on different question even though they don’t say it loud (Informant 1). And it absolutely creates mutual trust (ibid).

However, I am curious about that if they received any distrust from the public. Then the respondent answers that there is always suspicion there, and the people always want to know if the donation goes in the right way (ibid). And what you need to do is that show them statistics and the share stories (ibid). Another big obstacle for the organization is to explain why the vulnerable others need laughter, but not medicine, food, etc (ibid). It is the problem that they need to overcome when they meet new person (ibid). But they have been always overcoming that and then people start trusting them (ibid).
• **Does connection lead to further action?**

Unfortunately, according to the respondent the connection did not lead to too much further action, except for collecting donation from the audience (Informant 1). However, in my point of view, collecting money for the distant others is a meaningful action, which is, of course, based on mutual trust between audience and the organization.

**5.1.5. Concluding question**

• **Among the above social media logic, which one do you think plays most crucial role for this campaign?**

For the respondent, programmability of social media platforms has played a big role in the communication process (Informant 1). The success of the campaign is due to they give the audience a different perspective from what other humanitarian organization and world news do (ibid). People come to them because the organization give them hope which can make the world a better place (ibid). All of them depends on they are able to create the content and spread the message on social media platforms. And at the same time the audience are also free to leave comment or post related content regarding the case. It is a powerful dynamic which makes the process more interactive.

• **Generally speaking, are you satisfied with the outcome of the campaign so far? Have the campaign goals fully met?**

The respondent states that she feels positive about the campaign. The projects are still ongoing, but she thinks they have pretty much reached their goals (Informant 1). Of course it cannot be apart from the contribution of social media platforms as we discussed above.

• **Comparing to traditional mass media, what advantages and disadvantages do you see from social media usage in humanitarian campaigns?**

The respondent states that she and the organization loves social media, because it is a
useful tool to reach out people (Informant 1).

If you compare to mass media, you have to be specific about which paper, which radio channel you choose because that paper reaches certain group. I think social media can make it easier to reach various group of people. Since we are an NGO, social media is good because it is free. We cannot spend too much on advertising, radio or TV, etc (ibid).

Another advantage of social media platforms is that it changes the way of communication, namely it creates two-way communication (Informant 1).

It’s a way for us to communicate with our donors or our audience. If we have an article on paper or magazine, it is just one-way communication. They can hardly feedback. They hardly send us an e-mail and say hey I read your article… But on social media, if they have some critique, we can answer them directly, instead of they are reading it at home and thinking about it. I think it is good to have two-way communication (ibid).

Except for this, social media offers a platform where “they can report directly from their work; It can be not in the moment maybe, but the next day; it is a fast response: It creates trust as well” (ibid).

However, according to the respondent, traditional mass media has weight comparing to social media. And it can gain more attention.

If we are on the national news in Sweden, that creates a big spread for us that we wouldn’t get in our own channels on social media. We reach people of course but if we are on mass media, people will think that we are on the news. And it is always good (ibid).

And also, what social media lacks is an evaluation from the third party, because as campaign organizers it is always them talking about themselves rather than some other organization also gives an objective note regarding the campaign or organization (ibid). But traditional mass media is a platform which enables external organizations
focus on their activity and give meaning and credit on it, for instance if there are some news reports regarding their campaign on some major newspapers (ibid). It creates impact as well.

Last but not the least, the informant thinks that “they have grown a lot on social media in last two years and this leads them to get more and more publicity on mass media. It is the effect, so she thinks social media has helped them to reach the traditional media” (ibid).

5.2. Interview with volunteer
5.2.1. Understanding of the project

- Please describe your understanding of the refugee project which basically includes three sub-projects (För Syrians Barn, Välkommen till Sverige and Kärlik till barn på flykt). You can describe any of these projects. (e.g. the aim, mission, and value etc).

The interviewee gave detailed description of her understanding of the Kärlik till barn på flykt project. She describes the aim and mission of the project as below:

To give children and adults comic relief, to spread laughter, love and hope, and give a pause from the hardships of being a refugee due to war and prosecution. Since 2015 the focus is on Greece and to welcome people seeking asylum in Europe (reaching refugee children from Syria but also from Iraq, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Eritrea and other countries). Conducting tours including clown/circus shows and workshops in camps, hospitals, shelters and in the streets/port (Informant 2).

The interviewee basically has full picture of the campaign which is in line with the description of the campaign organizer. This means that we could not see it as a superficial knowledge of the campaign, but instead she knows what is the core value of it.

- When did you know this projects for the first time?
The participant started to know this project since 2012 (Informant 2). Up till now she is still an active volunteer in the project.

- **In what way are you engaging in the project/projects?**

  First of all, the volunteer is participating as a clown/artist on the field (Informant 2). Since 2015 she has been leading the team and go to Greece where they performed clown shows in shelters, official/unofficial camps, hospitals and the streets (ibid).

  Secondly, she is holding workshop and collaborating with the Greek team (ibid). In May 2016, they collaborated with the artists, performing together in two camps (ibid). Besides, she is also making evaluation of the work, contacting other workshop leaders and support the development of the team on an organizational and artistic level (ibid).

  Thirdly, she participated in spreading the information about the projects and performed as a clown in Stockholm Drömgalan 2014 and in other festival since 2013 (ibid).

- **What is the motivation behind your engagement?**

  The interviewee replies that her first motivation is firstly to spread laughter and comic relief to children and adult refugees (Informant 2). Secondly, she aspires to raise awareness, mainly in Sweden, about the life of children and adult refugees and create bigger understanding as well as strengthen the wish to help others in need (ibid). Thirdly, the respondent endeavors to fight against racism and spread the support for human rights (ibid).

5.2.2. **Questions about online participation**

- **When did you firstly see the information about the projects on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or other)?**

  The respondent states that she started to watch posts from tour of CUG on YouTube since 2009 (Informant 2). She also started to noticed the organization and the projects from their homepage www.skratt.nu (ibid). She mentions that she has been actively taking part in Clowner utan Gränser’s work on Facebook and YouTube since 2011.
It shows that, YouTube was probably the leading platform in early years to spread the information about humanitarian campaigns, when it enables more detailed graphic description of the projects.

- **Do you think social media platforms contribute a lot for your understanding of this campaign? Why? Or did you get to know it from other channels?**

The answer is yes. She explains that

I perceive that their posts on Facebook gives a great overview of what is happening on a broader scale mixing the local with the global in an personal way (as it is many posts from artists on tour). It has many times interested me to go further and read blogs and in-depth info about the work on the website skratt.nu (Informant 2).

What I see from this statement is that social media, Facebook in this case, has been a powerful tool to create interest for the audience to dig out more about the campaign. And it is noteworthy that she mentions the message on Facebook give an information of the issue on global scale which also interests her to understand more about the case. This is in line with what Informant 1 talked about when she mentions they always post something which related to big issues in the news. Besides, post from many artists also has an impact on understanding of the projects, because it shows that “there are lots of others who are doing the same thing like me” and it strengthen the solidarity among the public. And also I think in this sense programmability of the social media platforms has contributed a lot for the understanding of the campaign, because it enables users to create and post the content as they want. They are emancipated to actively take part in the discourse.

- **Which social media platform can make you better understand about the campaigns?**

The respondent replies that she mainly uses Facebook and she is a new user of
From what kind of content can you understand more about the campaign? (picture, video, news report, personal stories or others)?

For the respondent, picture, video and personal stories have been helpful to understand the projects (Informant 2). But she also thinks that news reports are also very important to know the bigger picture of the situation (ibid).

Have you ever Liked, comment, share, post (twit) any content about this campaign on social media? Please rank it in terms of frequency or preference.

She likes almost every post from the organization on Facebook (Informant 2). Then she shares events, news and posts on Facebook about the tours in Sweden and abroad (ibid). But what surprises me is that she selectively shares the content.

I have decided to share mainly from the tours I have participated in as it has the personal connection and also so as to avoid losing the interest of FB-friends by drowning them with too many posts (ibid).

Even though this statement somehow shows that sharing post is self-oriented, as it has personal connection with the participant, I think it actually has good connotation and purpose in nature. It is not selfishly to show followers or friends what they are participating and narcissiticly feel-good about participating in charity, but instead to avoid keeping the friends and followers and giving them more meaningful information. However, this also implies that posting and sharing content, to some extent, could have negative impact as the informant 2 replies, too much information could actually loose interest of others.

Why do you rank it in this order?

She says that she likes post because it is probably the easiest thing to do (Informant 2). Then she thinks posts comes second, but it is still important because it has personal
connection with herself (ibid).

- Has your participation on social media ever lead to your further engagement in the project (can be any kind of engagement (raise awareness, talk or take offline action)?

She claims that it has risen awareness amongst family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances (Informant 2).

Friends of friends who are journalists have contacted me to do interviews and make publications in newspapers, website and radio. Several friends that I meet more rarely (as we live in different cities and/or countries) have commented and expressed their interest and support of the organization (ibid).

- What result/changes do you expect for the campaign after you participate in the project?

The respondent states that she expects to raise awareness of the situation for children refugees and hopes the awareness can make people react and politicians to take action to help children and adult refugees to be safe (Informant 2). Besides that, giving a break of comic relief and laughter to the people who are enduring the hardships of life as a refugee is also what she expects to achieve (ibid).

5.3. Interview with random social media users

- What social media platforms are you using right now? Have you ever noticed any humanitarian campaigns on the platforms?

All of the respondents use Facebook as their first choice. This is followed by Twitter and Instagram.

I use Facebook quite often because most of my contacts are using it and it is a good tool to connect with them and to see what is going on around me (Informant 3).
Facebook is the one that I use most often on everyday basis, because I can obtain relatively more information on it from different articles, videos and photos (Informant 5).

Additionally, all of the informants state that they have seen different kinds of humanitarian campaigns on social media.

- **Are the humanitarian campaigns conveying positive information (like smiling face of victim after getting the help) or negative image (like vulnerable situation of the sufferer)? What is your first reaction when you first see the message?**

Most of the informants reply that they usually see negative image about the distant suffers.

I would say most of the humanitarian campaigns I’ve seen are negative, and I understand that they want to say what is going on out there to raise awareness among the public. But sometimes it is too negative and bloody that makes me feel a little uncomfortable (Informant 6).

I usually see both negative and positive messages about the campaign. But honestly speaking there are too many humanitarian campaigns out there on different media platforms, so I just feel numb about it right now (Informant 3).

- **Now I will show you campaigns from Clowner Utan Gränser. What would you do when you first see this on social media platforms? Do you take any action (it can be any kind of action such as read, like, share and so on)? Why and why not?**

The results show that most of the respondents remain at the stage of reading/understanding the cause, however, no further actions.

I might read the message first and try to understand what it is about, but I
would say I might not take further action, because I think there are too many similar cases/organizations out there and minor help will not change the situation dramatically (Informant 6).

I will absolutely read it first, and might like or share it if I am interested, but no other actions like donating before I’ve fully understood the cause. And also I firmly believe that I should critically look at the information before I’ve taken any action (Informant 4).

I might only read it first, because I am pretty restrictive to like and shares due to my personal preference. Sometimes when I see it on social media platforms I just scroll down, which means I might not even read it if it doesn’t catch my attention. I feel like social media has too many information and sometimes it is easy to miss some information (Informant 3).

Then I came up with a follow up question that if they will act differently if some friends share/like it on social media. And they reply that it might affect their opinion towards the cause.

Well, if my friend shares it or likes it, I might start looking at it instead of just scrolling it down (Informant 3).

If any of my contacts like or share it, it will attract my attention, because I want to find out what is special about the cause and I will keep following up the case (Informant 4).

- **Comparing mass media and social media, which one do you think can attract your attention about the campaign?**

The informants state that humanitarian campaigns on mass media will have more impact on their opinion comparing to social media.

As mentioned, I might quickly scroll down the posts no matter on Twitter or Facebook, so I might miss the information. But if it appears on newspapers
or TV I most probably take look at the information (Informant 3).

Well, if it appears on traditional mass media, it might attract my attention, but it doesn’t mean I fully trust the credibility of the information. Even though it is on mass media I still look at it critically (Informant 4).

In summary, the respondents show a certain degree of compassion fatigue when they see humanitarian campaigns on social media platforms. It is mainly due to the proliferation of such campaigns, as well as negative information that made them feel uncomfortable about situation. Additionally, social media has lower chance to catch users’ attention vis a vis mass media, and it is more likely to miss some information on social media because there are too many post running on news feeds. This is somewhat in line with what communication officer of CUG says that mass media has more weight than social media. But what is noteworthy about social media is that, connectivity among the user could actually create some opportunity to encourage them understand the campaign, because the fellow users are interested in the case as well. In the next few section, I will present further discussion surrounding the empirical data presented above.

6. Concluding discussions

The aim of the thesis project is to investigate in what way social media usage change and contribute to humanitarian communication under the logic of social media and whether it reflects post-humanitarian style of communication. In order to find answers for the inquiry, I divided the research question into two sub-questions. The questions will be address in the following sections.

6.1. The relationship between the social media logic and the expectation of the particular humanitarian aid

In order to explore answer for the first research question, I started with specific social media strategies of campaign organizers and it is followed by their perspective on the outcome of the campaign. As well, I also looked how the volunteers and random
social media users behave towards the campaign under the logic of media.

Social media has become a key element in modern humanitarian communication. As I discussed in early chapters, different social media platforms have different affordance and functions, so most probably inherent varied social media logic as well. For instance, on Facebook users are free to create their own content without limit of words, while Twitter has a limit of 140 words. Therefore, they have varied degree of programmability, namely Facebook offers more chance and freedom to post their own content comparing to Twitter, which eventually affects the choice of campaign organizers and the public when they call for action and engage in the campaigns.

The empirical data shows, when it comes to social media strategy, Facebook is the first choice of campaign organizers to establish a relationship with the public regarding certain campaign. The reason is that it has a potential to create more engagement. I would say this is mainly due to two domains of social media logic. First of all, campaign organizers post videos, articles and pictures as they want without limitation. Facebook has higher degree of programmability which eventually calls for feedback from the public towards the message. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to form a group, which I think creates a form of connection comparing to other social media platforms, so enhance the solidarity among the public. All of these factors could be a potential to intensify the engagement from the public. However, other social media platforms are also part of their social media strategies. For instance, Instagram can be a good tool to report directly from the field, which is also another strategy to gain public attention.

When it comes to the content they post, positive image is more preferred genre to call for the public’s engagement. Criticism on positive image in post-humanitarianism discussion shows that it could bring a risk of showing the spectators that the sufferer has no struggle any more. However, the campaign organizers argue that positive image is still more powerful message of hope, which is crucial to evoke public engagement, because most of the organizations show the negative side of story and
public has already been tired of seeing such a message. So it is important to show positive side of the story which build interest among the spectators. The public are still willing to participate. In addition to this, humanitarian campaign organizers are more likely to post self-generated contents comparing to shares. They think that it is more direct and instant way to express their mission and value while shares of news reports could be helpful to connect them with global issues.

The success of humanitarian campaign depends on many aspects including raising awareness, creating engagement and collecting fund for the project, etc. The empirical data shows that humanitarianism is not just about donating, but most importantly to raise awareness among public and evoke their moral agency. It is the precondition for taking further action and helping vulnerable others. Even though the public do not donate or take further action, it is still a good thing that they at least take a stand for the vulnerable others, because it might have a potential to influence others and create bigger impact. As we can see from refugee project of Clowner utan Gränser, the primary aim of the organization is to change the attitude of the audience and let them take a stand on the refugee crisis.

In this circumstance, social media platforms and their underlying logic seem to play a certain role to raise awareness. First of all, programmability of social media has emancipated both audience and campaign organizer to create their own content about the vulnerable others and navigate the flow of communication. Campaign organizers mostly post self-generated content about campaign, while share some external news about the global issues. What is noteworthy here is that direct and instant post from the field, such as pictures/video on Instagram, can create bigger impact in the communication process, because instant report from the field can build trust from the audience and eliminates the suspicion about how the organization is spending the funds. Castells (1996, 461) argues that “electronically-mediated media systems contributed to the transformation of time in our society in two forms: simultaneity and timelessness.” He also claims that “instant information throughout the globe, mixed with live reporting from across the neighborhood, provides unprecedented temporal
immediacy to social events and cultural expression” (ibid). As for the participants of the projects, such as volunteers, they are also free to post content about the campaigns, and many volunteers did in the case of Clowner utan Gränser. Post from other multi-sources contributes to the understanding the campaigns, because as a volunteer, they see someone else are doing the same thing like themselves. And also this creates a sense of connection and solidarity, in my point of view, towards the distant others.

Secondly, when it comes to popularity, the research data shows that the public emotionally prefers personal stories and picture/videos about the distant others. They are the ones which are mostly liked or shared. It most probably helps to build moral imagination among public to understand the circumstances. Besides this, the campaign organizer tries to associate the content with global issues. This helps to boost the popularity on social media platforms, for instance, sharing news reports from an influential newspaper. I would say this phenomenon is in line with what Madianou theorize as polymedia event. “Polymedia events refer to those events and news stories which unfold across different media technologies and platforms which are part of the composite environment of polymedia” (Madianou 2010, 261). Polymedia events are usually decentralized on the internet and “they invite people to connect the dots and to put the pieces of a wider jigsaw together” (ibid). It could potentially trigger moral education and cosmopolitanism (ibid). Sharing information from other new source, in my point of view, is a form of polymedia event and it shows that it actually has been useful to gain more attention from the public. In addition to this, in order to boost the popularity of the online content, campaign organizers are also part of some global events, such as Child Refugee Day, and this helped them to increase popularity of the online content.

Thirdly, as for connectivity, the humanitarian organization feels very connected to their audience. Especially, social media platforms provide chance to form a group, which is helpful to spread the information among the audience and conduct moral education. This could probably help to establish mutual trust between campaign organizers and audience. In addition to this, the data shows that connectivity could
potentially increase the chance of social media users’ association with certain humanitarian campaigns, even though they don’t pay attention to the appeal in the beginning, as we can see from random social media user’s response when they were asked if it will change their opinion when a friend likes or shares certain humanitarian appeal.

All in all, the logic of social media plays a certain role in humanitarian communication, especially the programmability of the platforms and connectivity between campaign organizers and social media users, as well as connectivity among social media users are the leading factors to create awareness and influence the outcome of the campaign.

6.2. Does humanitarianism on social media reflect any characteristics of post-humanitarianism?

Representation of post-humanitarianism are technologization of action and de-emotionalization of the cause (Chouliaraki 2010). In post-humanitarianism, action is simplified, such as just clicking like or commenting, and it does not persist longer (ibid). It is no-time engagement and effortless immediacy without further action (ibid). Another characteristic of post-humanitarianism is lack of justification of action (ibid). People might participate a certain campaign by sharing content on social media, and so on, but without asking why they need to do this (ibid). Besides this, de-emotionalization of action is another feature of post-humanitarianism, which implies people might act upon distant others, but it is not really for the well-being of the sufferers, instead the feel-good behavior of the self (ibid). However, based the empirical data, I would say this is partly the case.

Firstly, the empirical data shows that social media users do show compassion fatigue, a feeling of reluctance because the audience have been repeatedly informed of the cause, so that they are not interested any more (Chouliaraki 2013, 18). This potentially leads to the technologization of action, in which audience just like or scroll down the post, without any interest to further understand the case. The reasons behind
this is caused, according to empirical data, by both “bystander” effect in which the social media users feel their minor help could not change any situation, and the “boomerang” effect in which the respondent is tired of seeing bloody posts on their news feeds.

However, as we discussed in the previous chapter, connectivity of social media could potentially influence the audience’s view on the campaigns if the significant others in their network are interested in the appeal. Thus, as long as they are influenced, there is possibility for them to start to know the aim and mission of the projects and engage in the campaign.

As we also can see from previous chapters, the volunteer’s explanation of the campaign is in line with what the campaign organizer describes. Besides, the campaign organizer also claims that she feels that the audience, a small scale of the public in this case, understand the importance of the projects from their comments. In this circumstance, it could be problematic to say humanitarian activist joins the campaign without knowing question of why, because at least in small scale, the volunteers do understand the purpose of the campaign.

Secondly, according to the campaign organizer they have an amount of online participants who are constantly engaging in their activities. And also they are the ones who are taking further actions, such as making donations when they need support. They are staying with the campaign organizers in longer term, and this strengthens their knowledge and understanding of humanitarian campaign. In addition to this, the volunteer states that she has been engaging in the projects since 2009. But when it comes to a large public, the campaign organizer claims that they are mostly liking or sharing and then no further action. Therefore, I would say small scale of the groups have the intention to actively participate in the project in the longer term, but it has not been influential enough to evoke the moral agency in a broader scale. So in this case, for a large public, there is a sign of no-time engagement and technolization of action.
Thirdly, when it comes to the feel-good behavior of the self, the evidence shows that the volunteer understands the struggle of distant suffers and actively engages in the activities to relief the hardship of vulnerable. But the behavior of posting, liking something on social media does have personal connection to herself, because she wants to only share something she participated in. But I don’t think this is a form of narcissism, but instead it has good purpose, because she doesn’t want to bother her friends with too many irrelevant posts.

6.3. **Is social media a good tool for humanitarian communication?**

Social media has merit in humanitarian communication comparing to mass media. First of all, it enables campaign organizers to reach out the various group of people. Through the connection, the audiences are able to know what the humanitarian campaigns are trying to do. In response to the message, audience often react to this by liking, commenting, sharing or even posting, which eventually establish a form of connection with the campaign organizers. The connection usually endures for longer term in small scale of community. It eventually contributes further action, such as donation. Additionally, social media helps to gain attention from and establish relationship with traditional media as well.

Secondly, social media encourages public to speak out their voice, which eventually helps to build close relationship with campaign organizers. This enhances mutual understanding between campaign organizers and the audience, in which any suspicion upon the campaign projects could probably be addressed through the means of the communication. And also it usually takes shorter time for the interaction due to the various setting of social media platforms.

Thirdly, as we discussed earlier, social media platforms offer a chance to report directly from the fields. It is usually an instant feedback and presentation of the activity and it eventually contributes to eliminating the suspicion among the audience and establishing mutual trust.

However, traditional mass media has more power and weight comparing to social
media. Messages on mass media can get more attention for humanitarian organizations, however it is only one-way communication and hinders interaction between the public and campaign organizers.

Bennet once argues that “capacity of new media to engage individual users in fleeting and effortless, but potentially effective, forms of solidarity activism” (Bennet 2003 quote in). This study shows that social media has some potential to evoke moral engagement from audience towards the humanitarian causes. Especially when it comes to raising awareness, the logic of social media has navigated the public in certain ways, such as voluntarily and instantly posting contents, commenting on the posts, or forming group on the platforms. All of the affordance eventually contribute to building trust and eliminating suspicion from the public, which increase possibility of public engagement. Even though social media hasn’t been powerful like mass media to gain attention from the public towards certain humanitarian cause, still it plays a certain role to connect people and make them understand the struggle of distant sufferers in a more communicative way.

However, this study hasn’t been able to address some further questions in the context of social media logic. For instance, the logic of social media can be discussion in more details, such as how people specifically connect with each other in the process of humanitarian communication on social media. It needs us to observe the specific interaction process of online users. Besides, virality can be another realm of study in humanitarian communication. I would leave these topics for future discussions.
Bibliography


Kaplan, Andreas M. and Michael Haenlein. 2010. “Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media.” *Business Horizons* 53,


Interview respondents

Informant 1--- Communication officer of Clowner utan Gränser
Informant 2--- Volunteer in refugee children program of Clowner utan Gränser
Informant 3--- Random social media user
Informant 4--- Random social media user
Informant 5--- Random social media user
Informant 6--- Random social media user
Appendix A

Interview questions for humanitarian campaign organizers (face to face interview)

This interview is designed for my master thesis project in social media studies. The project is basically about how humanitarian organizations are utilizing social media platforms and what is outcome of campaigns through using the tools. I would like to invite you to answer the following question. The answer will only be used for academic purpose.

1. Overview of the project
   Please introduce one of your campaign projects base on the following questions
   
   What is the name of the project?
   When did it start?
   What is the aim of this campaign?
   What is the value of this campaign?
   How do you carry out this campaign?
   What is the progress right now?
   Who are engaging in this activity?

2. Social media strategies
   1) Please list the social media platforms that you are using for this campaign
   2) If I would like to ask you to rank the platforms in terms of importance and preference, how would you rank them? Why?
   3) What kind of content are you posting on these platforms? (self-generated content, share, etc)
   4) Are they mostly “shock effect” messages or “positive image” content? Why would you choose this specific genre?

3. Question of public engagement
   1) What kind of public engagement do you expect from your audience for this campaign?
   2) How do you define moral engagement from the audience?
   3) What is your understanding on three types of engagement (awareness/understanding, talk and action), which one is most important? And why?
   4) After publishing the content on social media, what kind of reaction and engagement do you see from your audience?
   5) What is the contribution of these engagement to the success of this campaign?
   6) Do you see further actions have been taken (for instance, offline action?)
   7) Does audience constantly engage in the activity or is it just short term engagement? How do you evaluate this?
8) Do you think the participants fully understand the value of this campaign?

4. Question to see what is the interviewee’s response and understanding regarding logic of social media in this context

**Programmability**
1) What function of social media platforms do you see most useful to trigger audience’s engagement (awareness, talk or action)? And what role does it play in the success of the campaign?

**Popularity**
1) What online content is most popular for this campaign?
2) Why do you think it became popular?
3) Did you use any strategies to boost the popularity?
4) In what way does the popularity influence the success of the campaign?

**Connectivity**
1) Do you think you are connected to your audience? In what way?
2) Do you think they are connected to each other? In what way?
3) What advantages and disadvantages (if any) of this connection for this campaign?
4) Do you think it can create mutual trust? How?
5) Does this connection lead to further action? In what way?

5. Concluding questions:
1) Among the above social media logic, which one do you think plays most crucial role for this campaign? Which one is least important?
2) Generally speaking, are you satisfied with the outcome of the campaign so far? Have the campaign goals fully met?
3) Comparing to traditional mass media, what advantages and disadvantages do you see from social media usage in humanitarian campaigns?

Thanks for your patience and support.
Best regards,
Gulzar
Appendix B

Interview question for humanitarian campaign participants (interview via e-mail)

This interview is designed for my master thesis project in social media studies. The project is basically about how humanitarian organizations are utilizing social media platforms and what is outcome of campaigns through using the tools. As a participant of the humanitarian campaign, the voice of volunteers will also be taken into consideration, because they contribute to the dynamic process of the humanitarian communication on social media, as well as the success of the campaign. Therefore, I would like to invite you to answer the following question. The answer will only be used for academic purpose.

1. Understanding of the project.
   1) Please describe your understanding of the refugee project which basically includes three sub-projects (För Syrians Barn, Välkommen till Sverige and Kärlik till barn på flykt). You can describe any of these projects. (e.g. the aim, mission, and value etc).
   2) When did you know this projects for the first time?
   3) In what way are you engaging in the project/projects?
   4) What is the motivation behind your engagement?

2. Questions about online participation
   1) When did you first see the information about the projects on social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram or other)?
   2) Do you think social media platforms contribute a lot for your understanding of this campaign? Why? Or did you get to know it from other channels?
   3) Which social media platform can make you better understand about the campaigns?
   4) From what kind of content can you understand more about the campaign? (picture, video, news report, personal stories or others)?
   5) Have you ever Liked, comment, share, post (twit) any content about this campaign on social media? Please rank it in terms of frequency or preference.
   6) Why do you rank it in this order?
   7) Has your participation on social media ever lead to your further engagement in the project (can be any kind of engagement (raise awareness, talk or take offline action)?
   8) What result/changes do you expect for the campaign after you participate in the project?

Thanks for your patience and support.

Best regards,

Gulzar
Appendix C

Interview with random social media user (face to face interview)

This interview is designed for my master thesis project in social media studies. The project is basically about how humanitarian organizations are utilizing social media platforms and what is outcome of campaigns through using the tools. I would like to invite you to answer the following question. The answer will only be used for academic purpose.

1. What social media platforms are you using? Have you ever seen any humanitarian campaigns on these platforms?
2. Are they positive or negative message?
3. How do you feel about these messages when you first see them?
4. Now I will show you campaigns from Clowner utan Gränser. What would you do when you first see this on social media platforms? Do you take any action (read, like, share and so on)? Why and why not?
5. Comparing mass media vs. social media, which one do you think can attract your attention more about the campaign? Which media platform do you trust most? why and why not?