



School of Social and Human Science

Department of Political Economics

The Positioning of International NGOs on Facebook: Communicating Through Social Network Sites

Ana Claudia Ascensão e Silva

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges

Supervisor:
José Jorge Barreiros, PhD
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

September 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for always supporting me and giving me the strength to follow my dreams, no matter how much physical distance these dreams leave between us.

I wish to thank my supervisor, Prof. José Jorge Barreiros, for all his availability and support throughout this process.

Finally, I would like to show my appreciation to all my friends who supported me along these last two years. Whether in Porto, Lisbon or Brussels, they have always encouraged me to complete this project against all adversities.

RESUMO

O presente estudo foi realizado enquanto requisito parcial para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em Desenvolvimento, Diversidades Locais e Desafios Mundiais. A investigação foca-se na forma como quatro grandes organizações não governamentais internacionais se posicionam na rede social Facebook.

As quatro organizações estudadas foram escolhidas com base no seu alcance internacional, reconhecimento a nível global e independência financeira, política e religiosa. A sua actuação tem lugar em diferentes campos de acção: direitos humanos (Amnistia Internacional), ambiente (Greenpeace), saúde (Médicos Sem Fronteiras) e desenvolvimento (Oxfam).

A investigação foi baseada na análise qualitativa das Páginas Facebook das organizações e em inquéritos por e-mail a responsáveis de comunicação dentro das organizações estudadas. Estas análises tornaram possível determinar, por um lado, se estas organizações não governamentais transportam as suas ideologias para o Facebook; e, por outro lado, quais são os objectivos comunicacionais das organizações em relação ao Facebook e se estes objectivos estão a ser atingidos.

Palavras-Chave: Comunicação, Social Media, Redes Sociais, Organizações Não Governamentais, Facebook.

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted as a partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges. The thematic on focus relates to the way four major international non-governmental organizations position themselves on the social networking site, Facebook.

The four organizations studied were chosen due to their international outreach, worldwide recognition and financial, political and religious independence. All the organizations represent four different sectors of action: human rights (Amnesty International), environment (Greenpeace), health (Médecins Sans Frontières) and development (Oxfam).

The investigation was based on the qualitative analysis of the organizations' Facebook Pages and e-mail inquiries to communications staff on the organizations. These exercises have made possible to determine, on one hand, whether the non-governmental organizations transport their ideologies to Facebook; and, on the other hand, which are the organization's goals for their Facebook presence and if they are being achieved.

Keywords: Communication, Social Media, Non-Governmental Organization, Facebook.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION	3
1.1 COMMUNICATION	3
1.2 ORGANIZATION	4
1.3 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION	6
CHAPTER 2 THE CONCEPT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION	13
CHAPTER 3 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES	21
3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA	21
3.2 SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES	22
3.3 FACEBOOK	26
CHAPTER 4 BACKGROUND ON ORGANIZATIONS	29
4.1 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	30
4.2 GREENPEACE	32
4.3 MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES	35
4.4 OXFAM	36
CHAPTER 5 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FACEBOOK PAGES	39
5.1 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	39
5.2 GREENPEACE	42
5.3 MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES	45
5.4 OXFAM	47
CHAPTER 6 E-MAIL INQUIRIES	49
6.1 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	49
6.2 GREENPEACE	50
6.3 MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES	51
6.4 OXFAM	52
CONCLUSION	55
REFERENCES	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 212)..... 24

Figure 5.2 Amnesty International Facebook Page on 8 July 2012..... 39

Figure 5.3 Greenpeace Facebook Page on 8 July 2012..... 42

Figure 5.4 Médecins Sans Frontières Facebook Page on 8 July 2012 45

Figure 5.5 Oxfam Facebook Page on 8 July 2012 47

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Amnesty International Facebook Page Analysis.....	42
Table 5.2 Greenpeace Facebook Page Analysis.....	44
Table 5.3 Médecins Sans Frontières Facebook Page Analysis	46
Table 5.4 Oxfam Facebook Page Analysis.....	48

INTRODUCTION

Social networking sites are nowadays one of the most powerful information vehicles and opinion-makers, being part of the daily life of millions of people all over the world as the main Internet activity.

With the title *The Positioning of International NGOs on Facebook: Communicating Through Social Network Sites*, this dissertation aims to understand how international non-governmental organizations use social networking sites, in particular Facebook, to communicate with their target-audience. In this sense, I wish to identify if the communication practices comply with the values that the organizations stand for; what is the main goal of their presence on the social networking site and if this goal is being achieved.

Therefore, this investigation wishes to answer two questions:

1. Are the NGOs' mission and values present in their Facebook pages?
2. Are the NGOs' Facebook communication objectives being achieved?

Personally, the choice of this subject of investigation rose as the most obvious, as my professional and academic background is focused on communication in non-profit organizations with a special interest for the digital media, especially social networking sites.

To answer these questions I will study four International Non-Governmental Organizations, namely Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxfam. These organizations come from four different fields of action: human rights, development, health and environment. In order to determine how these organizations position themselves on Facebook I will use two investigation methods:

1. Qualitative content evaluation of the organizations' Facebook Pages with the intent of determining if their behaviour in the social networking site is in compliance with the organizations' vision and mission.

2. E-mail inquiry to the members of the organizations responsible by communications or social media. With a list of short answer questions I intend to ascertain what are communication objectives defined by the NGOs for their Facebook presence and if those objectives are being achieved.

However, to better understand this dissertation and before getting into an investigation it is important to approach three different concepts: *Organizational Communication*, *Non-Governmental Organization* and *Social Networking Site*. Therefore, all concepts will be explained in their respective context in the first part of this dissertation before providing selected background information on the studied organizations.

I trust that this work can contribute to shed a light over the way social media is used as a tool by International NGOs. Knowing the way in which international non-governmental organizations communicate through social networking websites could contribute to their development and by adapting their external communication strategies to the NGOs' work environment and objectives, these organizations can improve the achievement of their goals.

The external communication strategy of an NGO, whether it being digital or not, is also related to the way these organizations are perceived by the political sector. Having a good communication strategy, with positive outcomes, in this field can bring several advantages to the organizations, particularly access to funding.

I expect that, besides informative, this qualitative analysis could be used as a guide and motivation for other non-governmental organizations, whether internationally active or not, to establish their own communication strategies for social media.

CHAPTER 1 | THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

1.1 | Communication

Encyclopædia Britannica (2011) defines communication as “the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols”. The word communication derives from the Latin *communicare* – *communis* – *cum moenia munus* that means *to make communal* (Faria Bilhim, 2006). However, finding a consensual definition for the concept of communication is nearly impossible, as several theories have arisen throughout the western world after World War I (Littlejohn and Foss, 2005).

Amid the different theories Dennis McQuail (2000) finds that the definition presented by George Gerbner is the most widely accepted due to its simplicity. Gerbner (1975: 43) defines communication “as social interaction through messages”. McQuail himself (2000: 499) describes this concept as “the process of growing points in common or sharing between the participants, based on the sent and received messages”¹.

However, Gerbner’s definition is too simple to express the whole of the communication process. Consequently, this investigation chose to adopt Lasswell’s model, presented in 1948 as the paradigm of social and political analysis. To Lasswell an act of communication must always answer the questions “who / says what / in which channel / to whom / with what effect?”¹ (Wolf, 1987: 29). According to this author “the scientific study of the communication process tends to focus in either one or the other of these questions”¹ (Wolf, 1987: 29).

Following Lasswell’s model, we can say that the communication process implies the presence of three elements: *who/emitter* (the person or organization that sends the message), *to whom/receiver* (who receives the message) and transmission channel (through which the information is sent). *With what effect?* focuses on analysing the audience and the effects of

¹ Own translation from Portuguese.

the message (*says what?*). Laswell is, therefore, considered one of the content analysis fathers, his model organized the communication research, that came into use at the time, around two central themes: effects analysis and content analysis. (Wolf, 1987)

If any of the three elements is not present the communication process becomes impossible. Also, in order for the process to be successful it is important that the emitter adapts the message to the receiver. If not, the information may be perceived incorrectly (Teixeira, 1998). To verify that the receiver has understood the message the emitter can use the feedback, where the receiver transmits his own version of the message back to the emitter (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2006).

“The communications process must be faced as a dynamic process, where new actors, new media and new definitions are constantly showing up”² (Hall 1984, cited in Scroferneker, 2006: 49). Therefore, we must perceive the communication process as an open system where feedback is essential (Faria Bilhim, 2006). “Good communications reflect a two-way dialogue, where we listen (what does our audience want?), design and deliver *audience-informed* strategies, and then gather feedback to assess our impact” (Research Matters, 2008: 1).

1.2 | Organization

Deriving from the Greek word *organon* (tool, organ), the term organization can have two meanings. It can either refer to social units and entities or to certain social processes, such as the organization of activities (Faria Bilhim, 2006). For the purpose of this work I will follow the first meaning, which implies that the organization is formed by “people and groups of people that interact with each other”² (Faria Bilhim, 2006: 22). This way, the organization exists to accomplish the communal objectives of its members, which would be impossible to attain by only one person (Faria Bilhim, 2006).

² Own translation from Portuguese.

Following the same logic, Edgar Schein defines organization as “the rational coordination of activities by a certain number of people, with the purpose of achieving a communal and explicit objective or intention, through a division of work and tasks, in an authority and responsibility hierarchy”³ (1980 cited in Faria Bilhim, 2006: 22). Most authors share similar opinions as Schein’s. Both Parsons and Donaldson point out that the shared goals are the main distinction between organizations and other kinds of social groups (Faria Bilhim, 2006).

From a management point of view, Annie Bartoli states “the act of organizing, reorganizing or improving the situation to obtain a certain unity in complex situations is an essential part of management”⁴ (Bartoli, 1991: 99).

Following Jay Galbraith’s (2002) Star Model, the design of an organization depends on five elements: strategy, structure, processes, rewards and reward systems and policies related to people. All these categories have the same degree of importance; each one determines and is determined by the others. Strategy determines direction and structure determines the location of decision-making power. By analysing the processes one sees the circulation flows of information and the rewards systems influence the motivation of people to perform and address organizational goals. By analysing people, or human resources, one sees the members’ mind-sets and skills.

According to Bartoli (1991: 102), an organization that wishes to communicate must present the following characteristics: to be open to communicate with the exterior; to be scalable, without excessive procedure; to be flexible between formal and informal communication; to be explicitly finalized, to give a thread to formal communication; to be empowering for all; to be energetic.

³ Own translation from Portuguese.

⁴ Own translation from French.

1.3 | Organizational Communication

According to Faria Bilhim (2006: 361) “organizational communication refers to all the means of communication used by the organization to relate to its audiences”⁵. Organizational communication is always connected to an organization, whether its purpose is to make a profit or not. Therefore, the organization can either be a non-profit, such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International, or a company, such as Coca-Cola or Nike. This kind of communication regards the way the organizations are structured communication wise, as it is not directed to the market. However, while the private sector invests millions in communications, “the public and non-profit sectors tend to perceive communications as an optional or fringe activity, and certainly not central to the work (e.g. the research) itself” (Research Matters, 2008: 2). To better reach their audience, non-profit organizations must change this point of view. “Organizations need to see communication as a vehicle that is not only helpful or required but essential to achieving core goals.” (Research Matters, 2008: 2)

The subject of organizational communication goes back to Harvard University, in the United States, and Elton Mayo’s Human Relations Movement in the 1930s. There were three types of institutions which had a determining role in its origin: “the USA armed forces (speak well to the troops), the American industry (sell the management’s ideas to the workers) and the academics (communication between superior and subordinate)”⁵ (Faria Bilhim, 2006: 361). However, up until World War II organizational communication was linked only to rhetoric, starting to migrate to social sciences in the 1960s and 1970s. Faria Bilhim (2006) states that 1967 was, to some authors, the official year when organizational communication became a part of the social sciences. But the final recognition was due to three main events: the creation of the International Communication Association in 1970; the creation of the Organizational Communication division at the Academy of Management in 1973; the publication of the first Organizational Communication Abstract in 1975 (Faria Bilhim, 2006). “From then on, the

⁵ Own translation from Portuguese.

theoretical approaches have been centred in the Modern or Empirical Theory, the Naturalist Theory and the Critical Theory.”⁵ (Scroferneker, 2006: 48)

In the 1980s, organizational communication began being studied based on the metaphorical knowledge. “A metaphor is a way of seeing one thing as if it were another and operates at multiple levels of analysis, in order to provide ways of grasping the organizational life.”⁶ (Faria Bilhim, 2006: 374) The study of organizational communication uses seven main metaphors: channel, lens, linkage, performance, symbol, voice and discourse.

Nowadays, organizations recognize the importance of communication as “a strategic instrument and an action force”⁷ (Costa, 1992: 192). Organizational communication is different from the communication produced in interpersonal situations, as it is ruled by a specific context with its own rules and guidelines (Costa, 1992). Joan Costa (1992: 192) defines organizational communication as the “planning, preparation and implementation of messages corresponding to predetermined objectives and strategies, and whose results must be checked and graded for such purposes”⁷.

For Annie Bartoli (1991: 136), communication becomes really organizational when:

- the ‘rules of the game’ are known and explained;
- locations and communication materials have been planned and selected with regard to the pursued objectives;
- the selection of relevant information indicators are performed and known;
- informal exchanges, horizontal or vertical, are not banned but instead favoured (e.g. with the objective of strengthening the team spirit and common culture).⁸

The mission of an organization must be legitimate and credible internal and externally, this means that the mission has to be shared by the internal and external audiences. In order to achieve this goal both the internal and external organizational communications strategies must be properly developed. Having a unique identity means that the communication strategy was

⁶ Own translation from Portuguese.

⁷ Own translation from Spanish.

⁸ Own translation from French.

well defined. A good communications strategy is a means of elaborating how the organization networks, participates, and interacts with the world (Research Matters, 2008). Therefore, the communication of the organization is the result of the interaction between four variables: strategy, structure and culture of the organization (Bartoli, 1991).

All the communication produced by an organization has an impact, as different kinds of organizations generate different kinds of reactions in the audience. The way the organization defines its communication strategy relates directly to the organization's management style and strategy. This means that the policies of the organization determine how the organization communicates. "In what concerns policy choices, organization and communication are closely interlinked: one depends on the other and vice versa."⁹ (Bartoli, 1991: 97) This relationship means that, although it is possible for human beings to communicate spontaneously, organizational communication requires a strategy that should be revised regularly (Bartoli, 1991).

The most visible characteristic of the organization's communication strategy is probably the communications plan. This plan's main function is to connect the communication to the strategy under the objectives of the organization's communications policy, which should present the general principles and guidelines (Bartoli, 1991). One of the most important steps of the communications plan is to choose the correct means of communication for each message. To make this choice one must take into consideration a great deal of factors, mainly the nature and goal of the message and the audience. All the means have advantages and disadvantages and must be used according to the situation at hand (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2006). Hall (1864, cited in Scroferneker, 2006) defends that we must take into account the needs, values and interests of the receiver, as well as the perception he has about the emitter and his role in the organization. Stereotyping and status differences are some of the factors that can either favour or hinder the communication process. "Communications are the most visible single activity we engage in, requiring extra delicacy – say the wrong thing or present

⁹ Own translation from French.

ourselves incorrectly and the damage could be severe and lasting.” (Research Matters, 2008: 3)

The structure and strategy of the organization not only determine how the organization communicates externally, but also internally. To Faria Bilhim (2006: 363), internal organizational communication has four great goals:

To control, formal and informally, the behaviour of the members of the organization; to motivate the members informing them about what they should do and providing feedback on the degree of execution; to meet the needs of affiliation that every human being has; to supply all the necessary information to decision making.¹⁰

Internal communication is directed to the audience within the organization, this includes stakeholders, partners, workers, volunteers, sponsors, etc. This kind of organizational communication is important, as the members of the organizations should also be its ambassadors. Usually, internal communication is used to disclose the organization's objectives, mission, values, culture as well as special events and changes in the routine. However, internal communication should not only be about information but also about motivation. It is essential to build up team spirit and internal branding. “The motivation of the workers is impossible without an effective communication.”¹⁰ (Teixeira, 1998: 185) Workers and volunteers should take part in the definition of the organization's objectives, they should “know what is expected of them, as well as to be heard and understood”¹⁰ (Teixeira, 1998: 186). Many company directors believe that by creating information materials, such as newsletters, communication can be improved; while others trust the principle of the office's “open door”, accessible meetings and information available to all levels of the organization (Bartoli, 1991: 96).

Internal communication can be formal or informal. Formal communication acts upon informal communication limiting the communication inside the organization to official channels, in

¹⁰ Own translation from Portuguese.

order to preserve the amount of exchanged messages at a reasonable number (Faria Bilhim, 2006). If this kind of rules were nonexistent then “the different actors involved who receive certain kinds of information may be inclined to claim all kinds of information”¹¹ (Bartoli, 1991: 135).

Formal communication refers mainly to official messages from the top to the bottom of the hierarchy, or from the bottom to the top, but there are also messages exchanged between peers and even between members of different hierarchical levels (Faria Bilhim, 2006). The main top-down communication channels are the command chain, bulletins, e-mails, newsletters, handbooks, meetings and training sessions. When it concerns bottom-up communication the channels are mainly reports, inquiries and complaints (Teixeira, 1998). It is important to take into the account the relation between offer and demand of information from each member of the organization, “the stronger the emission of formal information, the higher the demand for formal information”¹¹ (Bartoli, 1991: 135).

Yet, informal communication also plays an important role in the organization, as using only formal communication could lead to the absence of messages or to the delay in replies. Informal communication exchanges are many times formalized at a later stage (Faria Bilhim, 2006). Unlike formal communication, informal communication works in all directions with a network that is usually referred to as grapevine (Teixeira, 1998). The grapevine structure tends to present itself as one of four different chains, the single strand chain, the gossip chain, the probability chain and the cluster chain (Faria Bilhim, 2006). According to Sebastião Teixeira (1998: 191), the informal communication network has four key features:

The information is transmitted in all directions;

The communication is much faster, as it does not face the obstacles that are usually represented by rules and procedure;

It is selective regarding the audience; some things can be told to some people but not to others;

¹¹ Own translation from French.

It works besides the organization's walls (a big part of informal communication takes place outside working hours and places).¹²

Annie Bartoli states that "information is a crucial factor for the efficiency", as "a good decision comes from the proximity between the source of information and its place of use"¹³ (Bartoli, 1991: 36). However, it is not enough to produce information; organizations should develop their processes of producing and receiving information. Nonetheless, these processes should try to avoid any kind of communicative and informative excesses. "The management logic connects the internal communication to policy objectives and organizational principles; therefore, the excess of information or communication in all directions (internal or external) may be detrimental to the overall efficiency of the company or the unit concerned."¹³ (Bartoli, 1991: 136)

All of the communication strategies originate in the organization's culture, which is defined by the history and founders of the organization along with the current system of values, such as the internal terminology and demographics. "Culture, organization and communication are thus highly interdependent."¹³ (Bartoli, 1991: 133) The organizational culture is also fundamentally connected to the organization's identity, which "implies a notion of being that is perceptible or imaginable by others"¹⁴ (Costa, 1992: 210). This identity begins when organization's founders pass their personal culture onto the organization's mission and goals. This organizational culture "will develop and become established as 'its own way of being and doing', relatively stable so that it can be identified and assimilated by the public. This is the essence of identity"¹⁴ (Costa, 1992: 215).

Over the last decades communication patterns have been changing dramatically, with the Internet and the new media playing an increasingly important role in human relations. "The spread of electronic media has profoundly reshaped and, in some ways, *led to an almost*

¹² Own translation from Portuguese.

¹³ Own translation from French.

¹⁴ Own translation from Spanish.

complete dissociation of the relationship between physical location (space-time) and social location.”¹⁵ (Marinelli, 2004: 200)

E-mail has become one the most important means of communication, mainly due to its time and cost effectiveness, it is flexible and stimulates teamwork. However, the e-mail can also lead to an overload of information and to the replacement of daily personal interactions. It is, therefore, extremely important to manage the usage of e-mail within the organization.

¹⁵ Own translation from Italian.

CHAPTER 2 | THE CONCEPT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

The term non-governmental organization (NGO) began being used by the United Nations (UN) in 1945. The first definition was granted in 1950 as “any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty” (Alan Becker, 2011: 2). Over the last decades, “NGOs were recognized as significant players in world affairs” and the term “has become a commonly accepted phrase” (Martens, 2002: 272). However, there is still no globally agreed definition of the concept neither have NGOs been clearly identified in legal terms. In the UNESCO Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems (2002), Peter Willetts (2001: 4) defines NGO as “an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose”. Willetts (2002: 5) excludes from this common goal “achieving government office, making money or illegal activities”. Stuart Alan Becker (2011: 1) presents a simpler definition of NGO as “a legally constituted organization that operates independently from any government”. Alan Becker (2011: 2) also presents the definition proposed by the World Bank, stating that NGOs are “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development”.

Kerstin Martens uses the reasons given by Princen and Finger to explain the difficulty in characterizing NGOs: “The difficulty of characterizing the entire phenomenon results in large part from the tremendous diversity found in the global NGO community. That diversity derives from differences in size, duration, range and scope of activities, ideologies, cultural background, organizational culture, and legal status.” (1994 cited in Martens, 2002: 277)

Moreover, the term NGO has been “criticized for its negative connotations and inaccuracy – especially as it was structured from the point of view of governments and gained its boundaries in reference to them as ‘nongovernmental’” (Martens, 2002: 277). Kerstin Martens mentions that authors such as Weyers argue that “the term NGO should be substituted by a more ‘positive’ label” (1908 cited in Martens 2002: 277).

Along with the conceptual debate there are also some concerns that

NGOs take the place of what should belong to popular movements of the poor. Others argue that NGOs are often imperialist in nature, that they sometimes operate in a racist manner in Third World countries and that they fulfil a similar function to that of the clergy during the colonial era. (Alan Becker, 2011: 3)

In 1910, even previous to the establishment of the UN, “132 international NGOs decided to co-operate with each other under the label of the Union of International Associations” (Willetts, 2002: 4). However, the history of international NGOs dates further back to 1839 and “it has been estimated that by 1914 there were 1.083 NGOs” (Alan Becker, 2011: 2). In 1945, the United Nations started using the term non-governmental organization, “with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organizations which are neither governments nor member states” (Alan Becker, 2011: 2). The term was used to differentiate between the participation rights of intergovernmental specialized agencies and international private organizations. In what concerns the United Nations, almost all kinds of private organizations can be considered NGOs as long as they are “independent from governmental control, not seeking to challenge governments either as a political party or by a narrow focus on human rights, non-profit-making and non-criminal” (Willetts, 2002: 3). “Unlike much UN jargon, the term, NGO, passed into popular usage, particularly from the early 1970s onwards”. (Willetts, 2002: 4) Especially since the 1980s, the term has “become popular for societal actors of all sorts”, at international and national level, and has been “increasingly adopted more broadly by academics as well as by activists themselves” (Martens, 2002: 271-272).

With the exception of the Red Cross and Caritas, which arose at the end of the 19th century, most of these organizations “were founded after the two world wars” and “they were frequently born of compassion for the victims of those wars, to whom they sought to provide direct material assistance such as food or clothing” (Berthoud, 2001:1). The decolonization of Africa in the 1960s shifted the organizations focus to change, social justice and solidarity with the new nations of the South and national liberation movements. “The slogan of the United

Nations Food and Agriculture Organization – *Give them a fish and they will eat for a day; teach them to fish and they will eat all their life* – opened new doors of thinking: go to the causes of poverty.” (Berthoud, 2001:1)

With the different armed conflicts throughout the 1970s and 80s some European NGOs took on the “tasks of informal diplomacy”, these NGOs “served as mediators and intervened, sometimes together with and sometimes parallel to European Social Democratic solidarity movements and governments” (Berthoud, 2001: 2). Simultaneously, Europe was living a period of social mobilization, which raised “the banner of gender equity, environmental protection and the defence of human rights”. Consequently “the problematic of women, of sustainable development and of human rights today figure in any respectable development program, whether governmental or nongovernmental” (Berthoud, 2001: 2).

The work of NGOs has been greatly recognized since the 1970s and 80s, which has led to greater influence. “In the mid-80s, just as the development models were beginning to be questioned, the World Bank discovered that the NGOs were closer to the poor and were less onerous and corrupt and more effective than the traditional government channels.” (Berthoud, 2001: 2). Nowadays, NGOs are seen as “components of social movements”, along with all the people who collaborate towards the common goal (Willetts, 2002: 4). Social movements are part of civil society, a concept that came into use in the 1990s, most commonly referring to “all public activity, by any individuals, organizations or movements, other than government employees acting in a governmental capacity” (Willetts, 2002: 16). As a part of civil society and after the World Economic Forum of 1999 where “companies were called upon to widen their social responsibilities”, NGOs engage directly with companies to “formulate and monitor statements of business ethics” in order to evaluate and promote their social responsibilities in the areas of “human rights, labour standards and protection of the environment” (Willetts, 2002: 8).

Frequently, the term NGO “is applied only to organizations that pursue some wider social aim that has political aspects, but that is not overtly political” (Alan Becker, 2011: 1). In the

political environment, the term is often used as an uncontroversial “catch-all” term for interest group, pressure group, lobby and private voluntary organization. In reality, it is not possible to establish clear distinctions between these groups as all of them “have some interests to protect, even if it is only the maintenance of their reputation, increasing the number of active supporters and gaining sufficient income to communicate effectively” (Willetts, 2002: 5). Although there is no difference the term NGO “carries neutral connotations and applicability to a diverse range of political actors”. It is, therefore, not possible to differentiate “praiseworthy from unacceptable groups” as these differences are product of “a subjective choice made on the basis of each observer’s own value preferences” (Willetts, 2002: 6).

Among the several different structures of NGOs, Peter Willetts (2002: 3) distinguishes between “global hierarchies” and national organizations “based in a single country”. Both national and international NGOs work under the classic model of “a membership organization, co-ordinated in a geographically defined hierarchy. Individual people work in local groups, which co-ordinate in provinces and then have a headquarters in the capital city for the country as a whole”, or several countries in the case of international NGOs. However, there are “smaller specialist NGOs” that do not include all the levels of the hierarchy. On the other hand, in global organizations “the international level often seems relatively remote and attracts little attention”. Nonetheless, “such global organizations with their membership measured in millions do maintain a democratic policy-making process” (Willetts, 2002: 9). These global international NGOs, which will be analyzed further on, can also be referred to as Major Groups or civil society organizations (Willetts 2002). It is estimated that there are 40.000 internationally operating NGOs, but the “national numbers are even higher”, with Russia reaching 277.000 NGOs and India an estimated 1 to 2 million. (Alan Becker, 2011: 4). In what concerns the European countries, the Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has about 4.000 registered NGOs on record, “which does not cover the tens of thousands of small associations” (Berthoud, 2001: 1).

According to Willetts (2002: 4), the types of NGOs are equally diverse, so much that an individual cannot “support, or be opposed to, all NGOs”. NGOs exist for a variety of reasons,

such as “improving the state of the natural environment, encouraging the observance of human rights, improving the welfare of the disadvantaged, or representing a corporate agenda”. The high number of organizations reflects the broad range of political and philosophical positions covered by their goals (Alan Becker 2011: 4).

Both Alan Becker and Willetts support the distinction made by the World Bank between operational and advocacy/campaigning NGOs. “The primary purpose of an operational NGO is the design and implementation of development-related projects.” (Alan Becker, 2011: 3) These NGOs “need to possess an efficient headquarters bureaucracy, in addition to the operational staff in the field” (Willetts, 2002: 14). “Operational NGOs can be community-based, national or international.” (Alan Becker, 2011: 3) On the other hand, “the primary purpose of an advocacy NGO is to defend or promote a specific cause”, typically trying to “raise awareness, acceptance and knowledge by lobbying, press work and activist events” (Alan Becker, 2011: 4). Advocacy NGOs “have to mobilize resources, in the form of financial donations, materials or volunteer labour, in order to sustain their projects and programs (Willetts, 2002: 14). Despite the distinction, “specific NGOs will often change the balance of the activities they pursue” and “both operational and campaigning NGOs need to engage in fund-raising, mobilization of work by supporters, organizing special events, cultivating the media and administering a headquarters” (Willetts, 2002: 14-15).

Other types of NGOs can be classified according to variants of these two primary functions:

The most effective way to distinguish between NGOs is to obtain precise data on a range of different variables. The number of full-time employees, the number of members and the funding of the annual budget give measures of the size of any NGO. Opinion poll data on recognition of and support for an NGO or its goals, along with the frequency of positive mentions in the news media, give measures of its political strength. There are also more subjective variables, such as the professional skill, knowledge and experience of the personnel, that matter for both operational and campaigning purposes. (Willetts, 2002: 15)

Sometimes, different NGOs can join forces and work together towards a common objective in groups referred to as coalitions. These broad coalitions can either be umbrella INGOs [International NGOs], networks or caucuses are specifically formed in order to influence public policy towards a certain direction. When telephone calls were and expensive and most communication was made by letter “multi-national coalitions generally took the form of institutional structures” (Willetts, 2002: 11). With the development in communications technologies and cheaper air travel in the 1960s and 70s there was a rise in “the formation of looser issue-based networks of NGOs to exchange information, mobilize support and coordinate strategies” (Willetts, 2002: 12). These networks greatly increased in number and with no need for a formal structure in the 1990s thanks to the advent of e-mail and the Internet. However, “the most effective modern networks still derive their impact from being coalitions of well-organized NGOs. Although communication costs are now minimal, it is still essential to have sufficient resources at the centre, even if they are provided by a single member of the network” (Willetts, 2002: 12).

The global caucus is a variant of these global networks and “arises when a group of NGOs come together as lobbyists at an international diplomatic event”, focusing “on achieving specific outcomes from the diplomatic process” (Willetts, 2002: 12).

Nonetheless, not all NGOs are active in global politics, or attempt to influence politics at the country level:

Politics may also be seen, more broadly, as the process by which any set of people reaches a collective decision. This means that attempts by an NGO to mobilize individuals and change their personal behaviour, to win support from a religious group or a trade union, or to articulate their values in the news media are all forms of political action. (Willetts, 2002: 17)

In what concerns the geographical spread of NGOs, a false proposition that “NGOs were predominantly a feature of Western societies” used to be widely defended. However, “all societies in modern times have had large numbers of NGOs at least at the local level”, even “in the most authoritarian regimes or in the least developed countries”. (Willetts, 2002: 13,

14). Peter Willetts (2002: 14) states that although “the presence or absence of a democratic political culture is one of the major variables determining the number of NGOs”, “the size of a country its ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, the complexity of its economy and the quality of its communication infrastructure are also of crucial importance”. One other misjudgement is that NGOs are “Northern”. Although many international NGOs have a headquarters office in a European or North American location due to practical needs, it does not convert them into Northern NGOs. “The proper criteria for assessment whether an organization is global are the location of its membership, the staffing of its headquarters, the sources of its funding and the content of its programs.” (Willetts, 2002: 14)

Funding sources are in themselves the cause of the biggest part of the criticism addressed to NGOs. One of the most discussed issues in this sense is the governmental independence of these organizations, with the widespread notion that “government funding leads to government control” (Willetts, 2002: 7), when

the whole point of humanitarian intervention was precisely that NGOs and civil society had both a right and an obligation to respond with acts of aid and solidarity to people in need or being subjected to repression or want by the forces that controlled them, whatever the governments concerned might think about the matter” (Alan Becker, 2011: 5).

However, Peter Willetts (2002: 7) defends that “in more authoritarian societies, NGOs may find it very difficult to act independently” and “on the other hand, development and humanitarian relief NGOs need substantial resources to run their operational programs, so most of them readily accept official funds”. Although “the term “non-governmental organization implies independence from governments, most NGOs depend heavily on governments for their funding” (Alan Becker, 2011: 5). Even when NGOs design their own programs their total independence can be compromised “if the program is designed to make it more likely that government grants or contracts will be forthcoming” (Willetts, 2002: 7), since “the governments of the countries where an NGO is registered may require reporting or other monitoring and oversight” (Alan Becker, 2011: 6).

In conclusion,

NGOs are not just well meaning, uncontroversial, non-political groups. The impact of a particular NGO may vary across time and place, and from one issue to another, but collectively NGOs generate the dynamics of political change. [...] Virtually all government leaders, in both domestic and global politics, including those who have expressed hostility, will work with NGOs when they expect the most active NGOs to be allies, in support of their current political goals. (Willetts, 2002: 17)

CHAPTER 3 | THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

3.1 | Social Media

Before going into the world of Social Networking Sites it is important to clarify the broader notion of Social Media. “Social Media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user-generated content.” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre, 2011: 241) Following the same line, Kaplan and Haenlein (2009: 61) define Social Media as “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”. While Web 2.0 defines a new platform in which online content is “no longer created and published by individuals” but “continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion”; User Generated Content characterizes “the various forms of media content that are publicly available and created by end-users”, using the new software made available by the Web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 61).

Although the term “Social Media” has only started to be used in the 2000’s with the propagation of broadband internet service, the idea has been present since the Internet’s early days, created as “a platform to facilitate information exchange between users”. Therefore, blogs and social network sites are a natural evolution from the personal homepages and forums of the 1980’s and 1990’s (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 60). Unlike the traditional media, such as newspapers and television, social media are inexpensive and easily accessible, enabling anyone “to publish and access information” without the need of any significant resources (Sankaran and Ravikumar, 2011: 84).

“There currently exists a rich and diverse ecology of social media sites, which vary in terms of their scope and functionality.” While some are directed to the masses, such as Facebook, other focus on professional networks, like LinkedIn (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre, 2011: 241).

3.2 | Social Networking Sites

Social media sites are currently referred to as Social Network Sites, defined by boyd and Ellison (2008: 211) as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system”. In other words, “social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 63).

While there are different kinds of social network sites, most share the same basic structure: a network of visible profiles with lists of interrelated *Friends*, *Contacts*, *Fans* or *Followers*. The user’s profile is usually constructed with the answers to questions such as “age, location, interests, and an ‘about me’ section”, usually accompanied by a profile picture (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 213). Depending on the website’s approach and on the user’s own privacy preferences, profiles can either be public for all the members of the social network site or only to the members belonging to the user’s network, what we can call *Friends*. “On most sites, the list of *Friends* is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile.” (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 13) Promoting interaction between members, the great majority social network sites allow users to leave comments and messages on *Friends*’ profiles, send private messages and even chat services.

The main goal of most social network sites is to “enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks” (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 211). Although this enables connections that wouldn’t be made otherwise, most connections made in these sites reproduce pre-existent offline relationships between individuals. What Haythornthwaite calls “latent social network ties” (Haythornthwaite, 2005: 37). On many of the large SNSs (Social Network Sites), participants are not necessarily networking or looking to meet new people; instead, they are

primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. Even though *Friend* is the most usual term to describe these connections; it does not mean that a real friendship relationship exists.

While SNSs are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society, even if that was not the intention of the designers. (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 214)

Levy claims that in this “new virtual territory, the proximity is semantic rather than geographical or institutional” (Levy 2002 cited in Marinelli, 2004: 231).

“The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, SNSs are primarily organized around people, not interests.” (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 219)

According to boyd and Ellison (2008: 214) “the first recognizable social network site” was SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997. However, the site was not successful as a business, as most of the people using the Internet “did not have extended networks of friends who were online”, and shut down in 2000. Still, SixDegrees started the first wave of social network sites. From 1997 to 2001 services such as AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet and MiGente were launched. The second wave began in 2011 with the launch of Ryze.com, Tribe.net, LinkedIn and Friendster. However, “Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as ‘one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history’” (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 215).

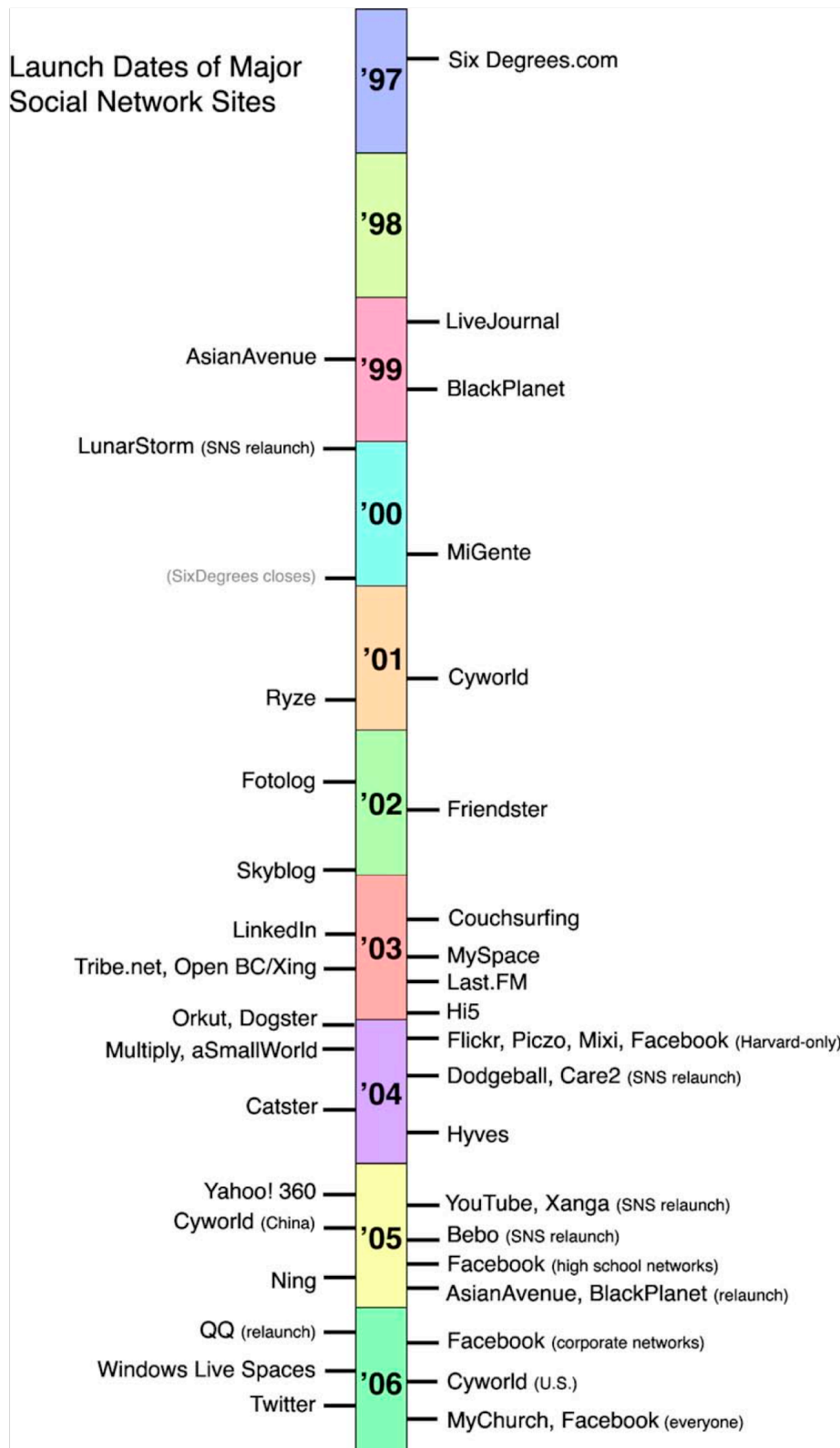


Figure 3.1 Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 212).

In 2003 social network sites went mainstream, with the launch of many new sites based on the “profile-centric” style (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 216). “While most SNSs focus on growing broadly and exponentially, others explicitly seek narrower audiences” targeting specific demographics (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 218). For instance, while LinkedIn and Xing focus on business people, Couchsurfing “connects travellers to people with couches”. On the other side of the trend, “websites focused on media sharing began implementing SNS features and becoming SNSs themselves. Examples include Flickr (photo sharing), Last.FM (music listening habits), and YouTube (video sharing)” (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 216). One of the most significant names of this third wave is MySpace, launched in 2003 it was mainly famous in the United States, while Orkut conquered Brazil and Hi5 spread its territory in Europe (boyd and Ellison 2008). However, Facebook¹⁶, launched in 2004, managed to rise above all the previous social network sites with more than 9000 million users so far¹⁷.

Social networks are even used by social and political activists in their movements, the biggest example being the Arab Spring¹⁸ in 2011. “Digital media has not only caused a cascade of civil disobedience to spread among population living under the most unflappable dictators, it has made for unique new means of civic organizing.” (Howard, 2011) The London riots in August followed the trend are considered to have been escalated and fuelled by this type of grassroots organization (Halliday, 2011). The latest example of social networks being used for social activism is the Kony 2012 viral video¹⁹. Despite all the controversy surrounding the motives and the work of the non-profit organization, Kony 2012 is the perfect reflection of the power SNSs have in spreading information. In just its first week online, “the film has been viewed 5.4 million times in 150 countries, with some 9,000 comments left on Vimeo. It has been viewed an additional 1.8 million times on YouTube” (Fox, 2012).

¹⁶ www.facebook.com

¹⁷ Facebook official data, March 2012. (Appendix 1, page 1)

¹⁸ A series of activities ranging from political protests to civil war that happened in a number of Arab countries, including Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria, beginning in the early months of 2011.

¹⁹ KONY 2012 is a documentary produced by the non-profit organization Invisible Children. The video is available on YouTube at: <http://youtu.be/Y4MnpzG5Sqc>

“Social networking sites are of such high popularity, specifically among younger internet users, that the term ‘Facebook addict’ has been included in the Urban Dictionary.” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 63-64) These websites have a medium level of social presence and media richness, enabling the sharing of pictures, videos and other forms of media in addition to text-based communication. SNSs score high in what concerns self-presentation and self-disclosure, allowing users a bigger level of self-disclosure than content communities such as YouTube. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009) “Several companies are already using social networking sites to support the creation of brand communities.” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 64)

3.3 | Facebook

Founded by Mark Zuckerberg, while he was a student at Harvard University, Facebook was launched in February 2004. Initially called *the facebook*, the site was an immediate success; within twenty-four hours there were already around 1.215 people registered (Cassidy, 2006). At first the access to the website was restricted to Harvard students and, later on, to other universities in the United States. In the first month alone more than half of Harvard’s 19.500 students were registered. In August 2005 *the facebook* became *Facebook* and started expanding to high schools and companies in September until, in September 2006, it became available to the general public (Phillips, 2007).

In June 2011 Facebook reached 1 trillion page views, making it the most-visited website on the Internet (Titlow, 2011). Currently, Facebook is the world’s most popular social network site with more than 900 million monthly active users, more than half of which (526 million) log in to the website daily. At the end of March 2012, there were more than 125 billion friend connections on Facebook and over 70 languages available²⁰.

²⁰ Facebook official data, March 2012. (Appendix 1, page 1)

Zuckerberg's idea for Facebook was inspired by Harvard's class directory, "known as the 'facebook', which features a photograph of each member accompanied by a few identifying facts, such as name, date of birth, home town and high school" (Cassidy, 2006).

Facebook allows users to create a personal profile and add other users as *Friends*, with whom they can share different types of content, such as private messages, pictures and a chat service. *Friends* "can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles. Facebook members can also join virtual groups based on common interests [...] and learn each other's hobbies, interests, musical tastes, and romantic relationship status through the profile" (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007: 1). Users can select their profile's degree of privacy, controlling who can see specific parts of their profile.

"One of Facebook's most popular features has been the ability to upload photos" through a very simple process. Users create albums that are added to their profile and determine who has access to view those pictures. Other users with the right permissions can then view and comment on the pictures (Yadav, 2006). On average more than 300 million photos are uploaded to Facebook per day²¹.

"For users, Facebook's core service is completely free and ad-supported" (Yadav, 2006). One of the main ways in which users use Facebook is to update their *Status*, with their thoughts or what they are doing at the moment.

According to Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007: 2) Facebook is mainly used to maintain existing offline relationships or solidify offline connections as opposed to meeting new people. "Facebook users engage in 'searching' for people with whom they have an offline connection more than they 'browse' for complete strangers to meet".

Besides the individual personal user profiles, *Pages* are also a big part of Facebook. With a structure very similar to profiles, they are used by brands, organizations or public figures to

²¹ Facebook official data, March 2012. (Appendix 1, page 1)

advertisement and promotion purposes or just to keep in touch and engage their fans and costumers (O'Neill, 2010). Unlike adding *Friends*, Facebook Pages collect *Fans* or *Likes*. Users select the Pages they *Like* in order to start receiving their updates, which can range from simple status, to links, videos or photos. While a personal profile can only have a maximum of 5.000 *Friends*, a Page can have an unlimited number of *Likes* and be customizable through the use of Tabs (Greenstein, 2009). Introduced in November 2007, there were already more than 42 million Pages with ten or more *Likes* at the end of March 2012²².

²² Facebook official data, March 2012. (Appendix 1, page 1)

CHAPTER 4 | BACKGROUND ON ORGANIZATIONS

This dissertation studies four international non-governmental organizations chosen due to their international outreach, worldwide recognition and financial, political and religious independence. As it was previously mentioned, they all represent four different sectors of action: human rights (Amnesty International), environment (Greenpeace), health (Médecins Sans Frontières) and development (Oxfam).

Out of the four international NGOs studied, only Médecins Sans Frontières is not a member of the Accountability Charter for International Non-Governmental Organizations. Then again, members from Oxfam and Amnesty International publicly support the Charter on its website²³:

The Charter is an important first step in demonstrating our accountability to our stakeholders. The reporting process provides an opportunity to evaluate our work and reaffirm our vision. It is a flexible accountability tool that we can confidently recommend to our partners and allies regardless of their size or structure. (Jeremy Hobbs - Executive Director, Oxfam International)

The INGO Accountability Charter has helped us promote the importance of our own accountability as an organisation amongst our members and staff. We believe individual awareness is crucial when it comes to integrating accountability into our daily practices. The INGO Accountability Charter has also allowed us to identify areas for improvement and to share good practices with other NGOs and the public in general. Being part of the Charter gives us the opportunity to be part of a community of practice on accountability and learning. (Zaira Drammis - Head of Learning and Impact, Amnesty International)

With a current total of 28 members, this Charter was launched by the founding members in 2006 as the first initiative to set out international, cross sector standards for the non-profit sector. The INGO Accountability Charter outlines its Member Organisations' common commitment to excellence, transparency and accountability, setting out core values and

²³ www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org

operating principles. All organisations meeting the Membership Criteria²⁴ requirements are invited to sign-up to the Accountability Charter.

The Charter covers the areas of good governance and management; and fundraising and multi-stakeholder engagement. It also makes specific reference to respect for universal principles (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), independence, responsible advocacy, effective programmes, non-discrimination, transparency and ethical fundraising. (Greenpeace, 2006a)

4.1 | AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is an international non-governmental organization working to defend human rights since 1961. It has more than “3 million supporters, members and activists in over 150 countries” (Amnesty International, 2011a).

Amnesty International’s vision is of a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. In pursuit of this vision, Amnesty International’s mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights. (Amnesty International, 2005)

Amnesty International strives to draw public attention to situations of abuse:

We believe that human rights abuses anywhere are the concern of people everywhere. Until every person can enjoy all of their rights, we will continue our efforts. We will not stop until everyone can live in dignity; until every person’s voice can be heard; until no one is tortured or executed. (Amnesty International, 2011^a)

²⁴ www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/join-the-charter-2/membership-criteria/

Specifically, the Amnesty fights for the freedom of expression, women's rights, the abolition of the death penalty, justice for crimes against the humanity and corporate accountability where companies have abused people's rights. Some of the more particular goals include the abolishment of the death penalty, ensuring free education to all children, end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, stopping torture and ill-treatment, among many others. These issues are fought for "through letter-writing, online and offline campaigning, demonstrations, vigils and direct lobbying of those with power and influence". (Amnesty International, 2011a)

The organization's public mobilization methods are supported by Amnesty's impartial reports on the subjects, as the main strength of Amnesty International is the power of the masses, defending that "together, we can make a difference" (Amnesty International, 2011a).

The foundations of the organization were set in 1960 when Peter Benenson read a newspaper article about two Portuguese students being sentenced to seven years in prison for raising a toast to freedom. At that time, Portugal was ruled by the repressive authoritarian regime of the *Estado Novo*, which dominated the country from 1933 to 1974, and anti-regime conspiracies were strongly repressed by the Portuguese state police and deemed anti-Portuguese. The British lawyer transferred his outrage to the article "The Forgotten Prisoners", published in the Observer newspaper:

Open your newspaper any day of the week and you will find a story from somewhere of someone being imprisoned, tortured or executed because his opinions or religion are unacceptable to his government [...] The newspaper reader feels a sickening sense of impotence. Yet if these feelings of disgust could be united into common action, something effective could be done. (Benenson, 1961)

Benenson's article launched the "Appeal for Amnesty 1961" defending the rights of those named *Prisoners of Conscience*. Prisoners of Conscience are set apart from other types of prisoners who are serving a sentence for violent related activities after a fair trial. This worldwide campaign "provoked a remarkable response" and "was the genesis of Amnesty

International”. The organization was founded in July 1961, in London, and officially named “Amnesty International” on September 30th 1962 (Amnesty International, 2011b).

In 1977 the Amnesty International was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for “having contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world”. Three years earlier, in 1974, Sean McBride, then Chair of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International, was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize “in recognition of his lifelong work for human rights” (Amnesty International, 2011b).

Amnesty International claims to be democratic, self-governing and “independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion”. The organization affirms to be also “financially autonomous, thanks to the generous support of donations from individual members and supporters”. The Amnesty makes clear that the organizations does not support or opposes any government or political system and it also separates itself from the views of those whose rights the organization seeks to protect. (Amnesty International, 2011a).

4.2 | GREENPEACE

Greenpeace is a global non-governmental organization working to “protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace” since 1971. It consists of Greenpeace International in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and 28 national and regional offices around the world, providing a presence in 40 countries with 2.8 million supporters worldwide (Greenpeace, 2011a).

Greenpeace defines itself as:

“An independent, campaigning organisation, which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace's goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity. (Greenpeace, 2011c)

The main focuses of Greenpeace's work are issues related to climate change, forests, oceans, agriculture, toxic waste and nuclear (Greenpeace, 2011d).

Greenpeace states that its mission is "to expose environmental criminals, and to challenge government and corporations when they fail to live up to their mandate to safeguard our environment and our future". In order to do that, the organization uses "research, lobbying, and quiet diplomacy, as well as high-profile, non-violent conflict to raise the level and quality of public debate" (Greenpeace, 2011a).

The organization's motto was adopted from Native American Chief Seattle and is one of the most recognizable environmental related quotes stating: "When the last tree is cut, the last river poisoned, and the last fish dead, we will discover that we can't eat money..."²⁵ It was first used by Greenpeace in one of the longest banners ever made. In 1981 two Greenpeace members climbed a smelter smokestack that was more than 152 meters tall and unfurled a 24 by 6 meters sign. "Their goal was 'to protest emissions of arsenic and sulphur dioxide'." (Greenpeace, 2011a)

The first action conducted by the group was in Amchitka, an island north of Alaska, on September 15 1971. A small boat, named Phyllis Cormack, sailed into the area where the United States Government was conducting underground nuclear tests. This campaign marked the beginning of Greenpeace's "bearing witness" practice, a Quaker²⁶ tradition of silent protest. However, by that time Greenpeace was still the Don't Make a Wave Committee formed in 1970 in Vancouver, Canada, with the only objective to stop a second nuclear weapons test in Amchitka. The name Greenpeace was born in 1972 from a suggestion of one of the Don't Make a Wave founders, Bill Darnell. "Somebody flashed two fingers as we were

²⁵ Quote Investigator [<http://quoteinvestigator.com/2011/10/20/last-tree-cut/>]

²⁶ Popular name of The Religious Society of Friends, or Friends Church, an international Christian movement.

leaving the church basement and said 'Peace'! Bill said 'let's make it a Green Peace'". The name was then used to baptize the boat used in Amchitka. (Greenpeace, 2008)

Although the Amchitka protest established Greenpeace's name in Canada, there is not one single founder of the organization but four important individuals whose legacy can still be found in Greenpeace's values. Journalist Bob Hunter was probably the most important of the four by helping to shape what is now known as a "Greenpeace Action", Hunter introduced the Cree Indian myth of the 'Warriors of the Rainbow'. David McTaggart, a former entrepreneur, "took Greenpeace's free-spirited founding ethos and translated it into an international organization". The couple of Quaker activists, Dorothy and Irvin Stowe, hosted the group's meetings, organized the Amchitka protest and introduced the group to ideas that would become part of the organization's founding ethos. "From the example of Gandhi, the Stowes believed that citizens acting with integrity and courage could defeat powerful forces. To this day, Greenpeace is 'bearing witness' and 'speaking truth to power'." (Greenpeace, 2008)

From then on, Greenpeace started spreading to other countries and campaigning against other environmental issues, such as commercial whaling and toxic waste. In 1979 Greenpeace's headquarters moved from Vancouver to Amsterdam and Greenpeace International was born (Weyler, 2003).

Greenpeace is nowadays the most well known environmental organization in the world, bringing environmental issues to the spotlight for decades. However, Greenpeace's radical methods have many times received criticism, its activists are frequently involved in quarrels with the authorities and the organizations often faces legal charges (Huebener, 2006).

Greenpeace promotes the autonomy of individuals on a global scale; it encourages individuals to conceptualize themselves as global citizens whose rights and responsibilities extend beyond the borders of the community or nation-state, and to bring about global change through local interactions with corporations, governments, and the general public. (Huebener, 2006: 2)

4.3 | MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) is an international non-governmental organization focusing on humanitarian aid and providing emergency medical assistance to populations in danger as well as medical training in more than 60 countries with more than 27,000 members from different nationalities. Médecins Sans Frontières has 23 national associative organizations with the main headquarters being in Geneva, Switzerland.

Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) goal is to provide medical and humanitarian assistance in several kinds of distress situations, such as natural or man-made catastrophes, epidemics, malnutrition or armed conflicts, without distinguishing between races, religions or political convictions. Following the universal medical ethics MSF claims to be neutral and impartial, operating “independently of any political, military or religious agendas”. Therefore, MSF's members and volunteers agree to “respect their professional code of ethics and to maintain complete independence from all political, economic or religious powers” (MSF, 2009a). Médecins Sans Frontières is able to maintain its independence due to private funding, “in 2009, MSF had 3.8 million individual donors and private funders worldwide” (MSF, 2011a), which account for more than 90% of the organization's overall funding (MSF, 2009a).

Although the organization is neutral and does not take sides in armed conflicts providing “care in the basis of need alone” (MSF, 2011a), Médecins Sans Frontières may sometimes speak out publicly. “MSF medical teams often witness violence, atrocities and neglect in the course of their work” (MSF, 2009a) and can sometimes raise their voice “in an effort to bring a forgotten crisis into view, alert the public to abuses occurring beyond the headlines, criticize the inadequacies of the aid system, challenge the diversion of humanitarian aid for political interests or call out policies that restrict access to medical care or essential medicines” (MSF, 2011a).

The organization was created on 21 December 1971, in France, by a group of doctors and journalists. During the Biafra secession, the civil war in Nigeria, doctors recruited by the

French Red cross were horrified by the genocide they witnessed and “decided to create an emergency medical organization of free speech and actions” (MSF, 2012a). Médecins Sans Frontières was then born from the merge of two separate groups, the Groupe d’Intervention Médicale et Chirurgicale en Urgence (Medical and Surgical Intervention Group), made up by French doctors who had worked in Nigeria, and the Secours Médical Français (French Medical Relief), working with the floods in East Pakistan (Bortolotti, 2004). After the merge, MSF published a call to doctors (“L’appel aux médecins”) in the December edition of the *Tonus Journal* announcing the creation of the organization and urging more doctors to join.

In 1999 Médecins Sans Frontières was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of “the extraordinary work of the organization's national and international relief workers who provide medical assistance in more than 80 countries, over 20 of which are in conflict”. The prize’s money was then donated “towards raising awareness of and fighting against neglected diseases” (MSF, 2009a).

Every year Médecins Sans Frontières provides emergency medical care to millions of people. Every day “more than 22,000 doctors, nurses, logisticians, water-and- sanitation experts, administrators, and other qualified professionals working with MSF can be found providing medical care around the world” (MSF, 2012c). MSF aims at filling existing gaps and reaching communities that are not being assisted and, in order to fulfil this goal, medical teams conduct evaluations on the ground to determine a population’s medical needs before opening programs.

4.4 | Oxfam

Oxfam is an international non-governmental organization functioning as a “confederation of 15 organizations working together in 98 countries [...] to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice” (Oxfam, 2011a) mainly aiming at a rights-based sustainable development and working primarily with local organizations. The organization subscribes to all international

covenants on rights and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, believing “that respect for human rights will help lift people out of poverty and injustice, allow them to assert their dignity and guarantee sustainable development” (Oxfam, 2011b).

Oxfam works directly with communities and its actions are focused in six main issues: development (trying to lift communities out of poverty with sustainable solutions based on their needs); emergencies (assisting areas affected by conflict or natural disasters); campaigning, advocacy and policy research (Oxfam, 2011c).

Oxfam’s vision is that of a world without poverty, “in which people can influence decisions which affect their lives, enjoy their rights, and assume their responsibilities as full citizens of a world in which all human beings are valued and treated equally.” Therefore, Oxfam’s goal is to “create lasting solutions to the injustice of poverty” using “a combination of rights-based sustainable development programs, public education, Fair Trade, campaigns, advocacy, and humanitarian assistance in disasters and conflict” (Oxfam, 2011d).

Having a strong commitment to human rights, Oxfam defends that everyone should have the right to a livelihood (“Oxfam works at many levels with partners and communities in support of their right to a decent living.”); basic services (“Being healthy and educated is an essential step along the route out of poverty.”); be safe from harm (“War and natural disasters cause untold suffering for millions of people around the world and keep them locked in poverty.”); be heard (“People living in poverty often have little influence over decisions that affect their lives.”) and to be treated as equal (“People who are marginalized [...] are more likely to be poor.”) (Oxfam, 2011b).

Oxfam started as the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief in 1942, in the UK, at a meeting in the Old Library of University Church St Mary the Virgin organised by University Vicar, Canon Milford (Oxfam, 2012a). “The group campaigned for food supplies to be sent through an allied naval blockade to starving women and children in enemy-occupied Greece during the Second World War.” Unlike most of the organizations created during that period, Oxfam

continued its work long after the War ended. In 1963 the first international section of Oxfam was created in Canada (Oxfam, 2011e). With the main aim of tackling poverty, Oxfam International was formed in 1995 by a group of independent non-governmental organizations with the shared goal of “working together for greater impact on the international stage to reduce poverty and injustice”.

Along with its international chain of charity shops, Oxfam financial stability comes from individual donors and fundraising events. Hundreds of celebrities have helped Oxfam’s fundraising efforts the early 60s, from the Beatles to Arctic Monkeys. “It’s not for the fame, and they’re not paid for it, they just believe in what we do, and some even get involved in our projects.” (Oxfam, 2012a)

CHAPTER 5 | CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FACEBOOK PAGES

The Facebook Pages of all four organizations were analysed on July 8th 2012 following the same evaluation criteria: number of fans, date of joining Facebook, availability for fans (and other users) to send messages and post on the organization's wall, type of content published and publication frequency, amount of comments and likes on publications, feedback given from the organization to comments, presence of games or competitions on the page, creation of events on the page by the organization, ability of direct actions from fans in the page itself.

5.1 | Amnesty International²⁷



Figure 5.2 Amnesty International Facebook Page on 8 July 2012

On Facebook since 24 March 2010, the Amnesty International has 70.133 fans on its global Facebook Page. The daily posts mostly reflect the organization's campaigns, with texts, pictures and videos not only of promotional and communications material produced by the Amnesty but also of actions such as letter writing, petitions and demonstrations made by members along with the general public.

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/amnestyglobal>

In fact, Letter-writing is one of the most recognisable ways of actions taken up by Amnesty International, both by the public and the victims:

Your little letters and cards are like bombs when they drop into the offices of ministers and government officials. When the cards and letters arrived into our barracks they were like rays of sunshine. We need the sunshine... Please keep up your work for Amnesty International. Sanar Yurdatapan, former prisoner of conscience in Turkey. (Amnesty International, 2011a)

Amnesty's campaigns refer both to issues of global interest and also region specific concerns, with celebrities being also a big part of these campaigns. Their participation in actions is also promoted on several Facebook publications.

Nonetheless, organized campaigns and actions are not the only focus of the posts on the Amnesty International's Facebook Page. In line with the organization's principles, of preventing and ending human rights abuse, there are several links to press releases published on the Page revealing situations of human rights violations across the world. In a much smaller amount, the organization also posts external links that are related to issues also defended and promoted by the Amnesty.

Amnesty International addresses governments, intergovernmental organizations, armed political groups, companies and other non-state actors. [...] It systematically and impartially researches the facts of individual cases and patterns of human rights abuses. These findings are publicized, and members, supporters and staff mobilize public pressure on governments and others to stop the abuses. In addition to its work on specific abuses of human rights, Amnesty International urges all governments to observe the rule of law, and to ratify and implement human rights standards; it carries out a wide range of human rights educational activities; and it encourages intergovernmental organizations, individuals, and all organs of society to support and respect human rights. (Amnesty International, 2005)

Participation is also an important part of the Amnesty's Facebook Page with direct calls to actions for fans to sign petitions and make donations to the organization. On a smaller scale Facebook Events are also used to call fans to action. In 2012, the Amnesty International created 4 events so far, which were mainly theme specific weeks of action where fans were invited to take action online, via their Twitter accounts, Facebook profiles, etc.

Besides these calls to action, fans also have the chance to directly interact with the organization. The Amnesty's Facebook Wall is open for everyone to share their views and fans can even send direct messages to the organization via Facebook Message. The Amnesty's posts receive hundreds of comments and likes from fans to which the organization replies not only to answer direct questions but also to comment and take part in discussions.

In order to have this open relationship working without problems the Amnesty International states in the About section of its Page a few guidelines fans must respect in order to post and comment. The organization invites everyone to share their views on the Page but warns that those who don't respect the short set of rules will be taken down.

Also in the About section, Amnesty International gives a very short description of the organization, but refers fans to the website in order to find out more about the Amnesty's mission and vision.

For its Profile Picture, Amnesty International uses the worldwide known candle logo born in 1961. On that year the first candle was lit in the church of St-Martin-in-the-Fields, in London, on Human Rights Day (December 10th) (Amnesty International, 1963). However, it was only in 1963 that "the first iconic Amnesty International candle design is unveiled" (Amnesty International, 2011b). The candle encircled in barbed wire came to founder Peter Benenson's mind "when recalling a favourite proverb: 'Better to light a candle than curse the darkness'" (Amnesty International Canada, 2001).

Number of Fans	70.133
Joined Facebook	24 March 2010
Receives Messages	Yes
Open Wall	Yes
Frequency of Posts	Daily
Status Updates	Yes
Internal Links	Yes
External Links	Yes
Photos	Yes
Videos	Yes
Comments	Average of 10 in 2012 and hundreds in 2011.
Likes	In the hundreds.
Feedback from the Organization	Yes, to comment and answer direct questions.
Games / Competitions	No
Events	4 in 2012
Direct Actions from Fans on the page	Yes (sign petitions and donate).

Table 5. 1 Amnesty International Facebook Page Analysis

5.2 | Greenpeace²⁸



Figure 5. 3 Greenpeace Facebook Page on 8 July 2012

²⁸ www.facebook.com/greenpeace.international

With over one million fans since January 2008, Greenpeace is, from the four organizations studied, the one with the biggest amount of fans on its Facebook Page. It provides a short, but accurate description of the organization on the About section of the Page without redirecting fans to the website.

Greenpeace has a very strong position to call fans to take action on its Page. There are several different posts on the same topic or campaign, with links to Greenpeace's articles, promotional and advertisement videos and photos of campaigns and volunteers' actions, as well as a small number of links to external websites sharing Greenpeace's views. Often these campaigns focus on specific worldwide famous companies, such as KFC, Shell and Apple, for not acting accordingly to the environmental principles supported by Greenpeace.

Following these principles, Greenpeace's work is led by a set of five core values: bearing witness ("You go to the scene of an objectionable activity to register your opposition by your presence."²⁹); non-violence ("Peaceful direct action is [Greenpeace's] way to get us all talking and demonstrate solutions."³⁰); independence ("To maintain its independence, Greenpeace does not accept donations from governments or corporations but relies on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants."³¹); "no permanent friends or foes" ("In exposing threats to the environment and finding solutions [Greenpeace has] no permanent allies or adversaries."³⁰); promoting solutions ("We don't work to manage environmental problems, we work to eliminate them."³⁰).

The strong demand for action is already visible in the page description, where Greenpeace states "Greenpeace exists because this fragile Earth deserves a voice. It needs solutions. It needs change. It needs action. It needs YOU!" The organization mainly calls for attitude changes from its fans, signatures for petitions and participation in actions and protests. In the Facebook Page itself fans can already sign petitions and make donations to Greenpeace. There

²⁹ Greenpeace 2008

³⁰ Greenpeace 2006b

³¹ Greenpeace 2011b

were no Events this year, but from 2008 to 2011 the organization invited their fans to an average of two events each year where they were requested to take offline actions, such as participate in protests, or do something online, like sending pictures.

A great part of these actions and protests organized by Greenpeace takes place at sea, with ships being a very important part of the organization. Greenpeace's most well known symbol, and its flagship, is the Rainbow Warrior. Launched in 1978, the Rainbow's Warrior name came from a North American Cree Indian legend that inspired Bob Hunter in the trip to Amchitka³². After being sunk in 1985 it was followed by Rainbow Warrior II, which was replaced by Rainbow Warrior III in 2011. However, along the years Greenpeace has had other ships, such as the currently in action Artic Sunrise and Esperanza.

Although Greenpeace's Facebook posts attract dozens of comment and hundreds of likes, the organization rarely gives feedback to its fans on the Page and does not take part in the discussions that happen in the comments. In order to interact with Greenpeace on Facebook, fans can send the organization a Message or write on the Wall, though these posts are not visible to the public.

Number of Fans	1.151.621
Joined Facebook	14 January 2008
Receives Messages	Yes
Open Wall	Yes (but not visible)
Frequency of Posts	Daily
Status Updates	Yes
Internal Links	Yes
External Links	Yes
Photos	Yes
Videos	Yes
Comments	Dozens.
Likes	Hundreds (often over 500).
Feedback from the Organization	Not often.
Games / Competitions	Yes
Events	Average twice a year from 2008 to 2011.
Direct Actions from Fans on the page	Yes (sign petitions and donate).

Table 5.2 Greenpeace Facebook Page Analysis

³² The legend described a time when humanity's greed has made the Earth sick and, at that time, a tribe of people known as the Warriors of the Rainbow would rise up to defend her.

5.3 | Médecins Sans Frontières³³



Figure 5.4 Médecins Sans Frontières Facebook Page on 8 July 2012

On its four years on Facebook, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has managed to attract almost 500 thousand fans to its Page. With a short description of the organization and the Page guidelines clearly expressed in the About section, MSF chose a different way to introduce itself to the public. On a dedicated tab Médecins Sans Frontières published a presentation video of what the organization is and how it was formed, its structure and founding resources and, mainly, the different activities on the field.

The video also reflects Médecins Sans Frontières' guiding principles of medical ethics, independence, impartiality and neutrality, bearing witness and accountability. These principles were first stated in MSF's Charter (MSF, 2011b) and in the Chantilly Principles. In addition, in 2006, the La Mancha Agreement gives a more widespread view of the organization's rules of action. "It outlines aspects of our action on which we agree and feel

³³ www.facebook.com/msf.english

are indispensable, taking into account our past experience, and identifying current and future challenges to this action.” (MSF, 2006)

Moreover, stories from the field are the main focus of MSF’s Facebook publications, either through links, status updates, pictures or videos. Most of these posts are reports and testimonials from the several field projects of Médecins Sans Frontières, explaining why and how the projects are being implemented and what fans can do to help. The main actors of these projects are “doctors, nurses, logistics experts, administrators, epidemiologists, laboratory technicians, mental health professionals, and others who work together in accordance with MSF’s guiding principles of humanitarian action and medical ethics” (MSF, 2009a).

With an average of 10 comments per post in 2012 and more than 70 in 2011, MSF often gives feedback to its fans to answer questions on the comments section. However, fans do not have any other means of interacting with the organization on Facebook since both the Messages and Wall options are not active.

On the other hand, Médecins Sans Frontières creates more Facebook Events than any of the other four organizations studied. These Events are mainly online, such as recruitment and informative webinars or live streaming of offline events.

Number of Fans	469.394
Joined Facebook	9 June 2008
Receives Messages	No
Open Wall	No
Frequency of Posts	Daily
Status Updates	Yes
Internal Links	Yes
External Links	Yes
Photos	Yes
Videos	Yes
Comments	Average of 10, but reaching over 70 in 2011.
Likes	Usually over 50, sometimes hundreds.
Feedback from the Organization	Yes, to answer questions.
Games / Competitions	No
Events	Yes (online).
Direct Actions from Fans on the page	Yes (donate).

Table 5.3 Médecins Sans Frontières Facebook Page Analysis

5.4 | Oxfam³⁴



Figure 5.5 Oxfam Facebook Page on 8 July 2012

Out of the four organizations analyzed Oxfam was the first to join Facebook, as early as 2007, however this does not reflect upon the number of Fans, with a little over 90 thousand. In the absence of an Oxfam International's Facebook Page the analysis was made to the Oxfam Great Britain's Page, home of the organization.

With the published links, photos, videos and very few status updates, Oxfam prefers advertising to information, particularly to its many physical and virtual stores, as well as encouraging fans to make donations. Furthermore, shopping and making cash or good donations are the available direct actions that fans can do on the Page.

The first of Oxfam's famous charity shops chains opened in Oxford in 1948, as one of the first in the world. "This innovative fundraising idea attracted donations ranging from false teeth, various stuffed animals, up to a houseboat." In its fight against poverty, Oxfam has

³⁴ www.facebook.com/oxfamGB

“taken on governments, international organisations and corporations” with unprecedented actions, such as taking out ads in the 50s, defying “restrictions by helping the people of Cambodia in ’79” and still harassing “numerous G8 conferences” (Oxfam, 2012a).

Oxfam also promotes and supports several campaigns on its Page but is not responsible for them, in other words, these are not Oxfam campaigns but launched by other organizations or companies.

The organization also encourages fans to like its posts and sign petitions. However, both Likes and Comments numbers are low, with many publications going without any Comments at all. This situation also reduces Oxfam’s chances of interaction with fans, as it does not have many questions to answer. However, fans also have the chance of contacting the organization via the Facebook Wall and Messages.

Oxfam makes a short description of the organization in the About section providing fans with direct links to specific issues, such as campaigns or recruitment opportunities.

Number of Fans	92.247
Joined Facebook	13 November 2007
Receives Messages	Yes
Open Wall	Yes
Frequency of Posts	Daily
Status Updates	Yes
Internal Links	Yes
External Links	No
Photos	Yes
Videos	Yes
Comments	Not always, average between 10-20.
Likes	Dozens and, not very often, hundreds.
Feedback from the Organization	Yes, to answer questions.
Games / Competitions	No
Events	No
Direct Actions from Fans on the page	Yes (donate goods and cash, shop).

Table 5.4 Oxfam Facebook Page Analysis

CHAPTER 6 | E-MAIL INQUIRIES

In order to find out which are the communications objectives defined by the organizations to their Facebook presence and if they are being achieved I sent an e-mail questionnaire to communications' professionals from the four organizations studied.

6.1 | Amnesty International³⁵

According to Edward Herbert, Social Media Coordinator, the Amnesty International doesn't have a specific communications department. "Each team has a specific contact number" and for general enquiries there is a section and contact number and on the Amnesty's website. Mr Herbert is "responsible for all social media messaging related to campaigns at Amnesty International, engagement with supporters and moderation of the channels", also working together with the regional offices on how to "collaborate on global campaigns, constructing social media guidelines, strategies and policies". Overall, Amnesty International has a relatively strong presence on Twitter and Facebook.

However, the Amnesty does not have a general communications plan, but several communications plans based on specific projects and campaigns. "Those plans are based on the general ethos of the organization, shedding light on situations that the public need to know about; supporting the voices of people who are in specific situations, etc". Still, the organization has "basic guidelines for employees and how they represent Amnesty within social media".

Amnesty's main goal on social media is to build a community within its main Facebook Page. In the past, the organization was more focused on increasing the number of likes, but over the past year Amnesty has developed "more strategic engagement and improving the click through conversion rate" to the website. Amnesty International wants to generate more actions/signatures, as this is the organization's most important tool online. Mr Hebert states

³⁵ See Appendix 2, page 2.

that images work better on Facebook than on Twitter, so the latter is used more as a broadcasting channel.

In order to evaluate whether these goals are achieved, Amnesty uses a range of online tools to generate analytics, which are then segmented into two main focuses: campaigns and general account overview. Campaigns are evaluated throughout and reflective report is produced at the end to compare the online and the offline impact. In what concerns the general overview, Amnesty tracks followers and likes every week as well as any spikes in traffic or engagement. Nonetheless, the Amnesty's Facebook Page performance is not in line with the organization's expectations at the moment, "considering how well known Amnesty International's brand is globally". Mr Herbert explains that the organization is gradually getting to where they want to be, but as an online presence the organization has a lot of expectation and was slow to start with it, therefore needing to be more innovative in its approach to online activism.

6.2 | Greenpeace³⁶

Media Analyst Soenke Lorenzen, states that Greenpeace has a dedicated communications department with a staff member dealing specifically with the organization's social media presence.

Within Greenpeace's global and campaign specific communications strategies there is a section focused on social media. The main goal determined by this social media strategy is to mobilize support to win campaigns, all of Greenpeace's media strategies for campaigns include mobilization via social media in one form or another. Twitter is more used for disseminating links to blogs/activities on the organization's website, while Facebook is used more to communicate with supporters and trying to mobilize them to join Greenpeace's campaigns.

³⁶ See Appendix 3, page 4.

To measure the effectiveness of these strategies, Greenpeace uses different online tools for social media analysis evaluating the performance on a monthly basis and “with more in-depth qualitative media research in regards to specific campaign activities”. The Facebook page is updated based on the campaign communication strategies, which are aligned with the global communication strategy. “Performance is measured foremost by user activity”.

6.3 | Médecins Sans Frontières

By the closing of this investigation Médecins Sans Frontières’ Social Media Managers still had not replied to the inquiry despite several e-mails having been exchanged with communications staff. However, by using MSF’s 2010 Social Media Strategy, available online³⁷, I was able to find answers for most of the questions in the inquiry. Starting by the fact that there are staff members dedicated to the management of the organization’s social networks and that MSF has a communications strategy focused on social media in order to “support MSF operations through visibility, loyalty building, and advocacy potential”.

Médecins Sans Frontières’ Facebook presence is organized along important languages, such as English, French, German, Spanish and Arabic. In this particular case, I analyzed the English Facebook Page. The organization’s strategy is based on the three pillars of MSF communications: “Visibility, Acceptance and Leverage”.

MSF believes sees Facebook was a way of bringing the field “closer to home societies and opening the door for interaction between field workers/office staff and fans”, creating a great user engagement. “Facebook also opens for direct communication where users can contact MSF directly and where MSF has the possibility to respond publicly right away to enquiries, which could be part of a strategy to ensure transparency and accountability towards donors and beneficiaries.”

³⁷ <http://pt.scribd.com/doc/51793448/MSF-Social-Media-Strategy>

In order to evaluate the success of this social media strategy, which the organization believes can have a much higher potential audience reach than its websites, MSF uses analytics and tracking tools, such as Page Likes (aggregate and growth rates), Post Likes, Page visits and site referrals.

6.4 | Oxfam³⁸

Even though Oxfam did not reply to the questionnaire, as the organization states not having the time and resources to answer these types of inquiries, Ms. Charlotte Isles from Oxfam's Education department indicated where the answers could be found.

In its Strategic Steer 2012/13 – 2014/15, Oxfam states the organization's goal to have "one global brand identity", aligning Oxfam's external communications strategy by using the same look and feel and express the organization's values and positioning in the same way in all the countries it works in. This way, Oxfam's expects to make the public wish "to be part of a wider global community".

Oxfam recognizes the power of digital communications and views this technology has an opportunity to improve the organization communicates, from the "interaction with financial supporters through to engaging with digital communities about poverty". Oxfam intends to adapt its strategy in order to communicate with all its "stakeholders in ways that are appropriate to them", "enabling our supporters to feel more emotionally connected to Oxfam and its cause".

John Gaventa, former Chair of Oxfam, states in his message in Oxfam's Annual Report & Accounts 2010/2011 reveals that when the two major social networks – Facebook and Twitter – were launched the organizations did not foresee the new possibilities they presented. Since then, Oxfam has been "developing and implementing a 'digital vision'". Mr Gaventa

³⁸ See Appendix 4, page 6.

concludes “in the years to come, Oxfam will increasingly use digital technology to amplify the voices of people living in poverty”.

Following this strategy, the Report against corporate objectives 2010/11 states that the “integrated communications strategy was agreed by all Divisions, and work began to align Divisional communications objectives”. Although “Oxfam website traffic decreased against the same period in 2009/10 (which reflects the impact of the Haiti emergency in 2010)”, “visitors are staying on the site longer”.

In the 2010/2011 period 1.0 million people globally took online campaign action, while on the following period of 2011/2012 the number rose to 1.6 million. Ms Isles gives the example of the See for Yourself campaign, where one of Oxfam’s supporters “travelled to Zimbabwe and used social media to publicise the campaign”. (<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/seeformyself>.)

CONCLUSION

The conceptual background along with the Facebook Pages analysis and the interviews to members of the organizations allowed me to find answers to the two hypotheses and, possibly, facilitate the social media communication strategy of other non-governmental organizations. I believe that by knowing the way in which international non-governmental organizations communicate through social network websites could contribute to the general development of NGOs. By adapting external communication strategies to NGOs' work environment and objectives, these organizations can improve the achievement of their goals.

1. Are the NGOs' mission and values present in their Facebook Pages?

It is clear to conclude that the organization's Facebook Pages are in line with their missions and values and that these same missions and values are visible throughout the pages. The organizations' principles start by being stated on the About section of the pages with descriptions of the organizations and continue along most of the posts, focusing on actions, campaigns, protests and stories from the field. These posts and links are always in line with the organizations' principles, even external links are always related to issues that are also defended and promoted by the organizations or campaigns that they support or which they agree with.

For instance, Amnesty International's Social Media Coordinator, Edward Herbert, reveals that the organization's social media communication plans "are based on the general ethos of the organization, shedding light on situations that the public need to know about; supporting the voices of people who are in specific situations"³⁹. Being the organization with the longest history in the field of human rights and the biggest recognition from the public, the Amnesty International "is believed by many to set standards for the movement as a whole" (Ronand, Ramos and Rodgers, 2005: 6).

³⁹ See Appendix 2, page 2.

In fact, except for Oxfam which focuses its posts mostly on advertising for its online and offline shops while still mentioning campaigns, all the organizations studied use their Facebook Pages to illustrate what they are doing and to engage with the public by calling the fans to action and interacting with them. Greenpeace even starts by calling Page visitors to action on its About section, stating: “Greenpeace exists because this fragile Earth deserves a voice. It needs solutions. It needs change. It needs action. It needs YOU!”. These calls for action are predominantly centred on asking for signatures in petitions, donations and promoting the participation in campaigns, actions and protests. In what concerns direct interaction with fans, the organizations allow the public to send private messages, post on their walls and make comments to posts, links, videos and photos.

From what is visible in the Pages, the organizations give their feedback to the fans by replying to questions and commenting on discussions. Still, it is impossible to determine how open organizations really are with their fans as we do not know if more negative comments are deleted by Page managers or if all messages sent via the Page are replied to. In the particular case of this investigation, I have sent a Facebook Message to both Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières in order to have the answers to the e-mail questionnaire. Until the end of this study, only Amnesty International replied, which might be representative of the degree of importance with which the organization regards social media.

The alignment with the organizations’ mission and values is in itself also a way to comply with their audience’s desires, as they would not become fans of a non-governmental organization Facebook Page without agreeing with the organization’s principles. It is, therefore, indispensable that organizations listen to their fans and consequently adapt the content of their posts. NGOs should “find out what *they* would like to hear; what *they* would like to talk about; what *they* might find interesting, enjoyable, and valuable. Then, develop and post content that fits those expectations” (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2009: 66). If the content posted by the organizations does not reflect the interests of the fans they run the risk of Likes becoming Unlikes and, therefore, a decreasing number of fans on the Page.

2. Are the NGOs' Facebook communication objectives being achieved?

In order to measure the achievement of their communication objectives towards Facebook, all organizations use a range of online tools to generate analytics: tracking followers, user activity (such as comments and likes as well as any spikes in traffic or engagement). Although the ultimate goals defined by these organizations for their Facebook presence are still not being fully achieved, it is safe to say that it's the NGOs' belief that they will as the organizations assent to the power of social media. Médecins Sans Frontières, for instance, believes that Facebook can have a much higher potential audience reach than the organization's websites.

This still low performance from the organizations' Facebook Pages reflects on the not so high number of fans that, apart from Greenpeace, are not proportional to the organizations' reputation. The amount of fans is also not proportional to how old the pages are. Oxfam's has the oldest Facebook Page, created in November 2007, but only 92.247 fans; while Greenpeace has the biggest number fans, at 1.151.621, in spite of the page having only been created in January 2008. Surprisingly, due to the organization's worldwide fame, Amnesty International has the smallest amount of fans, at 70.133, on a page created in March 2010.

In fact, fame may also be the reason behind Greenpeace's leading spot among the four organizations analyzed in what concerns the number of fans. In addition, Greenpeace supports a theme that is generally well perceived by the general public, as it is commonly acknowledged that the environment is in danger and needs to be protected from further harm. Moreover, Greenpeace also has a big presence in the media due to the organization's highly visible protests, which often become controversial and attract opposition and criticism. One of the most striking moments in Greenpeace's history happened in Auckland on 11 July 1985 when the French intelligence bombed the Rainbow Warrior, sinking the vessel and killing one photographer aboard. The ship "had just evacuated a group of Pacific islanders contaminated by US nuclear testing in 1956 and was about to set sail for the French nuclear test zone at the

Mururoa atoll. The act of sabotage on an unarmed ship, at anchor in the port of a friendly country, created an international scandal” (Goldenberg, 2007).

On the other hand, Oxfam’s and Médecins Sans Frontières lower fan count can be explained by the multiple number of Facebook Pages belonging to these same organizations and organized under language or location. As an example, the Oxfam confederation has 15 members, in countries such as Australia, India or Germany, though the Oxfam International Secretariat is still based in Oxford, leading and supporting the collaboration between Oxfam’s affiliates in order to increase the organization’s impact through advocacy campaigns, development programmes and emergency response. (Oxfam, 2011e)

While the situation is also visible on a smaller scale with Amnesty International’s and Greenpeace’s Facebook multiple language pages, there is a bigger concentration on the international Pages. This situation could be explained, at least in Greenpeace’s case, by the co-ordination position the international offices has on national offices. Although national and regional offices are independent to carry out global campaign strategies in their local context, Greenpeace International develops and coordinates these global strategies. “Greenpeace International co-ordinates worldwide campaigns and monitors the development and performance of national and regional Greenpeace offices.” (Greenpeace, 2011b)

This reality of lack of performance on Facebook can also be explained by the relatively new character of Social Media in the non-profit sector. Although Facebook has been active for around eight years, Pages were only launched in 2007 and were predominantly used by companies and public figures. In effect this is the justification given by Edward Herbert for the fact that Amnesty International’s Facebook Page performance is not in line with the organization’s expectations at the moment, in spite of how well known the Amnesty’s brand is globally: “We are gradually getting to where we want to be, but as an online presence we have a lot of expectation and we were slow to start with and need to be more innovative in our approach to online activism.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See Appendix 2, page 2.

Social media is still a challenge, either for non-profits or business, and social media strategies are essential to determine how to deal with this new generation of audience who no longer wants to be talked at but who wants organizations to listen, appropriately engage and respond. “By analyzing identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups, firms can monitor and understand how social media activities vary in terms of their function and impact, so as to develop a congruent social media strategy based on the appropriate balance of building blocks for their community.” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre, 2011: 250)

The lack of these defined social media strategies is likely to explain the poor performance of NGOs on Facebook. Apart from Médecins Sans Frontières, all the organizations studied do not have a specific social media plan but, instead, communication plans that are focused on campaigns and have a small allocation for social media. The situation will not change until non-governmental organizations abandon the informal approach with which they deal with social media and see it as an important communication channel with very specific characteristics and for which a fitting strategy is more than necessary.

To sum up the investigation it is possible to simplify the reply to the two hypotheses in the following way:

1. Are the NGOs’ mission and values present in their Facebook Pages?

Yes, all four organizations clearly state their mission and values on their Facebook Pages as well as continuously expressing them in the different posts.

2. Are the NGO’s Facebook communication objectives being achieved?

Not yet, due to the fairly recent phenomenon that is Facebook and other social networking sites. However, the organizations believe that situation will soon change due to their communication strategies along with the power of social media.

REFERENCES

- Amnesty International (1963), *First Annual Report 1961-1962*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International (2005), *Statute of Amnesty International* [online] Available at: <<https://bangla.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/statute>> [Accessed 3 January 2012].
- Amnesty International (2011a), *About Amnesty International* [online] Available at: <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/about-amnesty-international>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Amnesty International (2011b), *The history of Amnesty International* [online] Available at: <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/history>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Amnesty International Canada (2011), History - The Meaning of the Amnesty Candle [online] Available at: <http://amnesty.ca/about/history/history_of_amnesty_international/meaning_of_the_Amnesty_candle.php> [Accessed 22 December 2011].
- Alan Becker, Stuart (2011), “The definitive description of a non-government organisation”, *The Phnom Penh Post*, [online] 28 January. Available at: <<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2011012846452/Special-Reports/the-definitive-description-of-a-non-government-organisation.html>> [Accessed 11 October 2011].
- Bartoli, Annie (1991), *Communication et Organisation: Pour une politique générale cohérente*. Paris: Les Éditions d'Organisation.
- Benenson, Peter (1961), “The forgotten prisoners”, *Amnesty International*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/about-us/amnesty-50-years/peter-benenson-remembered/the-forgotten-prisoners-by-peter-benenson>> [Accessed 22 December 2011].
- Berthoud, Olivier (2001), “NGOs: Somewhere between Compassion, Profitability and Solidarity”, *Envio* [online] 241. Available at: <<http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/1526>> [Accessed 11 October 2011].
- Bortolotti, Dan (2004), *Hope in Hell: Inside the World of Doctors Without Borders*. Ontario: Firefly Books.
- boyd, dana and Ellison, Nicole (2008), “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship”, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, [online] 13 (1), 210-230. Available at: <<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>> [Accessed 3 October 2011].
- Cassidy, John (2006), “Me media: How hanging out on the Internet became big business”, *The New Yorker*, [online] 15 May. Available at: <http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/05/15/060515fa_fact_cassidy> [Accessed 11 October 2011].
- Costa, Joan (1992), *Imagen Pública: Una ingeniería social*. Madrid: Fundesco.
- Ellison, Nicole, Steinfield, Charles and Lampe, Cliff (2007) “The benefits of Facebook “friends:” Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites”, *Journal*

- of Computer-Mediated Communication* [online] 12(4), article 1. Available at: <<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>> [Accessed 1 May 2012].
- Encyclopædia Britannica (2011), *communication* [online]. Available at: <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/129024/communication>> [Accessed 7 November 2011].
- Facebook (2011), *Statistics* [online] Available at: <<https://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>> [Accessed 17 October 2011].
- Faria Bilhim, João Abreu (2006), *Teoria Organizacional: Estruturas e Pessoas*. Lisbon: Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas.
- Fox, Zoe (2012), “Millions Watch and Share Film Aiming to Stop Ugandan LRA Leader”, *Mashable* [online] 7 March. Available at: <<http://mashable.com/2012/03/07/kony-2012/>> [Accessed 27 May 2012].
- Galbraith, Jay R. ed. (2002), *Designing Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gerbner, George (1967), “Mass media and human communication theory”, *Human Communication Theory*, pp. 40-57. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Goldenberg, Suzanne (2007), “Rainbow Warrior ringleader heads from selling arms to US government”, *The Guardian* [online] 25 May. Available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/may/25/usnews.france>> [Accessed 17 March 2012].
- Greenpeace International (2006a), *Transparency and Accountability* [online] Available at: <www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/our-core-values/transparency-and-accountability/> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2006b), *Our core values* [online] Available at: <<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/our-core-values/>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2008), *The Founders of Greenpeace* [online] Available at: <<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/history/founders/>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2011a), *About Greenpeace* [online] Available at: <<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2011b), *Greenpeace Structure and Organisation* [online] Available at: <www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/how-is-greenpeace-structured/> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2011c), *Frequently Asked Questions* [online] Available at: <<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/faq/>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenpeace International (2011d), *What we do: The issues we work on* [online] Available at: <<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Greenstein, Howard (2009), “Facebook Pages vs Facebook Groups: What's the Difference?”, *Mashable* [online] 27 May. Available at <<http://mashable.com/2009/05/27/facebook-page-vs-group/>> [Accessed 28 May 2012].
- Halliday, Josh (2001), “London riots: how BlackBerry Messenger played a key role”, *The Guardian* [online] 8 August. Available at

- <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/aug/08/london-riots-facebook-twitter-blackberry>> [Accessed 27 May 2012]
- Haythornthwaite, Caroline (2005), “Social networks and Internet connectivity effects”, *Information, Communication & Society* [online]. 8:2, 125-147. Available at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691180500146185>> [Accessed 15 April 2012].
- Howard, Philip N. (2011), “The Arab Spring’s Cascading Effects”, *Miller-McCune* [online] 23 February. Available at: <<http://www.miller-mccune.com/politics/the-cascading-effects-of-the-arab-spring-28575/#>> [Accessed 11 October 2011].
- Huebener, Paul (2006), “Greenpeace. Globalization & Autonomy Glossary”, *McMaster University* [online]. Available at <http://www.globalautonomy.ca/global1/glossary_entry.jsp?id=OR.0053> [Accessed 17 March 2012].
- INGO Accountability Charter (2012), *INGO Accountability Charter* [online] Available at <<http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharter.org/>> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Kaplan, Andreas M. and Haenlein Michael (2010), “Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media”, *Business Horizons* [online]. 53(1): 59–68. Available at: <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681309001232>> [Accessed 13 October 2011].
- Kietzmann, Jan H., Hermkens, Kristopher, McCarthy, Ian P. and Silvestre, Bruno S. (2009), “Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media”, *Business Horizons* [online]. 54(3): 241–251. Available at: <<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681311000061>> [Accessed 13 October 2011].
- Kinicki, Angelo and Kreitner, Robert (2006), *Comportamento Organizacional*. Translated from English by Maria Lucia G. L. Rosa. São Paulo: McGraw-Hill.
- Littlejohn, Stephen and Foss, Karen (2005), *Theories of Human Communication*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Marinelli, Alberto (2004), *Connessioni: Nuovi media, nuove relazioni sociali*. Milan: Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati SpA.
- Martens, Kerstin (2002), “Mission Impossible? Defining Nongovernmental Organizations”, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* [online] 13 (3), 271-285. Available at: <<http://www.springerlink.com/content/u862m12k50192135/>> [Accessed 13 October 2011].
- McQuail, Dennis (2000), *Teoria da Comunicação de Massas*. Translated from English by Carlos de Jesus. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
- Médecins Sans Frontières (1999), MSF Awarded Nobel Peace Prize [online] Available at: <<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/press/release.cfm?id=513>> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2006), *La Mancha* [online] Available at: <<http://www.msf.dk/OmMSF/Hvemervi/LaMancha-aftalen/>> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2009a), *About MSF* [online] Available at: <http://www.msf.org/msf/about-msf/about-msf_home.cfm> [Accessed 15 December 2011].

- Médecins Sans Frontières (2001a), *About Us: History & Principles* [online] Available at: <<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/aboutus/?ref=main-menu>> [Accessed 15 December 2011].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2001b), *MSF's Charter* [online] Available at: <http://www.msf.org.uk/about_charter.aspx> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2010), *MSF Social Media Strategy* [online] Available at: <<http://pt.scribd.com/doc/51793448/MSF-Social-Media-Strategy>> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2012a), *1971: La création de Médecins Sans Frontières* [online] Available at: <<http://www.msf.fr/histoire-sommaire-book-page/1971-creation-medecins-sans-frontieres>> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2012b), *About Us: Timeline* [online] Available at: <<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/aboutus/timeline.cfm>> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Médecins Sans Frontières (2012c), *Support Our Work: Activities* [online] Available at: <<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/aboutus/activities.cfm>> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- O'Neill, Nick (2010), "Facebook Groups Vs Pages: The Definitive Guide", *AllFacebook* [online] 2 February. Available at: <http://allfacebook.com/facebook-groups-pages_b10512> [Accessed 28 May 2012].
- Oxfam (2011a), *About Us* [online] Available at: <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/about>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Oxfam (2011b), *Oxfam's commitment to human rights* [online] Available at: <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/why>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Oxfam (2011c), *What we do* [online] Available at: <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/what>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Oxfam (2011d), *Oxfam Purpose and Beliefs* [online] Available at: <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/what/purpose-and-beliefs>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Oxfam (2011e), *History of Oxfam International* [online] Available at: <<http://www.oxfam.org/en/about/history>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Oxfam (2011f), *Oxfam Online Report & Accounts 2010/2011* [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/OGB/What%20we%20do/About%20us/Plans%20reports%20and%20policies/documents/report_accounts10_11.ashx> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Oxfam (2012a), *A History of Oxfam* [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/history/index.html> [Accessed 25 March 2012].
- Oxfam (2012b), *Oxfam Strategic Steer* [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/OGB/What%20we%20do/About%20us/Plans%20reports%20and%20policies/documents/2013_Strategic_Steer.ashx> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Oxfam (2012c), *Oxfam Online Report & Accounts 2011/2012* [online] Available at: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/~media/Files/OGB/What%20we%20do/About%20us/Plans%20reports%20and%20policies/documents/2011_2012_Online_Report_and_Accounts.ashx> [Accessed 18 August 2012].

- Oreports%20and%20policies/documents/Annual-report-2011-12.ashx> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Phillips, Sarah (2007), “A brief history of Facebook”, *The Guardian* [online] 25 July. Available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2007/jul/25/media.newmedia>> [Accessed 27 May 2012].
- Research Matters, 2008. Designing a Communications Strategy. In: Gavin Bennet and Nasreen Jessani, ed. 2008, *The Knowledge Translation Toolkit Bridging the Know-Do Gap: A Resource for Researchers*. [online]. Available at: <<http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=851>> [Accessed 14 December 2011].
- Ronand, James, Ramos, Howard and Rodgers, Kathleen (2005), *Transnational Information Politics: NGO Human Rights Reporting, 1986–2000* [online] Available at <<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/rgchr/ISQsubmission.pdf>> [Accessed 3 January 2012]
- Sankaran and Ravikumar, T. (2011), “Impact of social media on global business”, *SRM Management Digest* [online]. 9: 84–88. Available at: <http://59.160.116.109/downloads/srm-digest_2011.pdf#page=84> [Accessed 1 May 2012].
- Scroferneker, Cleusa (2007), “Trajetórias teórico-conceituais da Comunicação Organizacional”, *Revista FAMECOS: mídia, cultura e tecnologia* [online]. 3 (31), 210-230. Available at: <<http://revcom.portcom.intercom.org.br/index.php/famecos/article/view/1110/832>> [Accessed 20 October 2011].
- Teixeira, Sebastião (1998), *Gestão das Organizações*. Lisbon: McGrawHill.
- Titlow, John Paul (2011), “Facebook Hits 1 Trillion Pageviews”, *Read Write Web* [online] 24 August. Available at: <http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/facebook_hits_1_trillion_pageviews.php> [Accessed 27 May 2012].
- United Nations (1948), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* [online] Available at <<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>> [Accessed 18 August 2012].
- Weyler, Rex (2003), “Waves of Compassion”, *UTNE Reader* [online]. Available at <<http://www.utne.com/archives/WavesofCompassion.aspx>> [Accessed 17 March 2012].
- Willetts, Peter (2002), “What Is a Non-Governmental Organization?”, *UNESCO Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems* [online]. Available at: <<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/p.willetts/CS-NTWKS/NGO-ART.HTM>> [Accessed 10 October 2011].
- Wolf, Mauro (1987), *Teorias da Comunicação*. Translated from Italian by Maria Jorge Vilar de Figueiredo. Lisbon: Editorial Presença.
- Yadav, Syd (2006), “Facebook – The Complete Biography”, *Mashable* [online] 25 August. Available at: <<http://mashable.com/2006/08/25/facebook-profile/>> [Accessed 3 October 2011].

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beer, David (2008), "Social network(ing) sites... revisiting the story so far: A response to danah boyd & Nicole Ellison", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* [online] 13 (2) 516-529. Available at: <<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2008.00408.x/full>> [Accessed 13 October 2011].
- Caron, François (2000), "Internet, c'est la troisième révolution industrielle", *L'Express* [online] 27 April. Available at: <http://www.lexpress.fr/informations/internet-c-est-la-troisieme-revolution-industrielle_637621.html> [Accessed 18 October 2011].
- Davis, Thomas Richard (2008), "The Rise and Fall of Transnational Civil Society: the evolution of international non-governmental organizations since 1839", *Working Papers on Transnational Politics - City University London* [online]. Available at: <<http://www.staff.city.ac.uk/tom.davies/CUWPTP003.pdf>> [Accessed 11 October 2011].
- Ghiglione, Rodolphe and Matalon, Benjamin (1977) *O Inquérito: Teoria e Prática*. Translated from French by Conceição Lemos Pires. Oeiras: Celta Editora.
- Giordano, Valeria and Parisi, Stefania eds. (2007), *Chattare: Scenari della relazione in rete*. Rome: Meltemi editore.
- Quivy, Raymond and Van Campenhoudt, Luc (1995), *Manual de Investigação em Ciências Sociais*. Translated from French by João Minhoto Marques, Maria Amália Mendes e Maria Carvalho. Lisbon: Gradiva.
- Santos Silva, Augusto and Madureira Pinto, José eds. (1990), *Metodologia das Ciências Sociais*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 | Facebook Statistics

News	
Company Info	
Key Facts	
Management	
Timeline	
Pages	
Products	
Platform	
Engineering	
Advertising	
Safety and Privacy	
Photos and B-Roll	
Investor Relations	
Contact Info press@fb.com	
<input type="text" value="Search"/>	
	About Facebook Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.
	Headquarters 1601 Willow Road, Menlo Park, California, 94025
	Employees 3500+
	Statistics 901 million monthly active users at the end of March 2012. Approximately 80% of our monthly active users are outside the U.S. and Canada. 526 million daily active users on average in March 2012. 488 million monthly active users who used Facebook mobile products in March 2012, and more than 500 million mobile monthly active users as of April 20, 2012. During March 2012, on average 398 million users were active with Facebook on at least six out of the last seven days. More than 125 billion friend connections on Facebook at the end of March 2012. On average more than 300 million photos uploaded to Facebook per day in the three months ended March 31, 2012. An average of 3.2 billion Likes and Comments generated by Facebook users per day during the first quarter of 2012. More than 42 million Pages with ten or more Likes at the end of March 2012. Facebook is available in more than 70 languages.
	Board Members

Appendix 2 | Amnesty International E-mail Inquiry



Master in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Name.** Edward Herbert
2. **Position within the organization.** Social Media Coordinator
3. **Does the organization have a communications department or a staff member/volunteer responsible for the communications related activities?** We do not have a specific communications department. Each team has a specific contact number and for general enquiries we have a reception/contact us number and section on the site.
4. **Is there a staff member/volunteer dedicated to the management of the organization's social networks (particularly Facebook)?** I work within the digital team and then offer my services to campaigners. I am responsible for all social media messaging related to campaigns at Amnesty International are running, engagement with supporters and moderation of the channels. We have a relatively strong presence on Twitter and Facebook. I also work with regional offices on how we collaborate on global campaigns, constructing social media guidelines, strategies and policies.
5. **Does the organization have a communications plan?** We do not have a general one. We develop communications plans based on specific projects and campaigns. Those plans are based on the general ethos of the organisation, shedding light on situations that the public need to know about; supporting the voices of people who are in specific situations, etc.
6. **If so, does the plan have a section focused on social networks?** As much as we don't have a general plan. We do have basic guidelines for employees and how they represent Amnesty within social media.
7. **If so, what are the main goals for communicating on social networks, particularly on Facebook?** We want to build a community most specifically within the main



Facebook page. In the past year our goals have changed. We used to be more focused on increasing number of likes and now we have developed more strategic engagement and improving the click through conversion rate to our website. We want to generate more actions/signatures as this is our most important tool online. Images work on Facebook much better than they do on twitter. We use twitter more as a broadcasting channel.

8. **If there are not any, is there any kind of defined strategy for communicating on social networks, particularly on Facebook?** N/A

9. **How are these goals/strategy evaluated? We use a range of online tools in order to generate analytics. We segment these analytics in to two main focuses; campaigns and general account overview.** For campaigns we evaluate throughout and produce a reflective report at the end. We are then able to compare the impact online with offline and present this to the campaigners. In terms of general overview, we currently track followers and likes each week and any spikes in traffic or engagement.

10. **In case there is neither a communications plan nor a strategy, how is the social networks management made?** N/A

11. **Is the organization's Facebook page performance in line with the organization's expectations? How and why?** Not currently. Considering how well known Amnesty International's brand is known globally. We feel that there is large room for improvement. We are gradually getting to where we want to be, but as an online presence we have a lot of expectation and we were slow to start with and need to be more innovative in our approach to online activism.

Appendix 3 | Greenpeace E-mail Inquiry



Master in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Name.**
Soenke Lorenzen
2. **Position within the organization.**
Media Analyst
3. **Does the organization have a communications department or a staff member/volunteer responsible for the communications related activities?**
Yes
4. **Is there a staff member/volunteer dedicated to the management of the organization's social networks (particularly Facebook)?**
Yes
5. **Does the organization have a communications plan?**
Yes, a global communication strategy and campaign communication strategies
6. **If so, does the plan have a section focused on social networks?**
Yes
7. **If so, what are the main goals for communicating on social networks, particularly on Facebook?**
Mobilize supports to win campaigns, all the media strategies for our campaigns include mobilisation via social media in one form or another. Twitter is more used for disseminating links to blogs/activities on our website, whereas FB is used more in communicating with our supports and trying to mobilize them to join us in our campaigns
8. **If there are not any, is there any kind of defined strategy for communicating on social networks, particularly on Facebook?**
9. **How are these goals/strategy evaluated?**
We do social media analysis (using different online tools) to evaluate our performance on a monthly basis and with more in-depth qualitative media research in regards to specific campaign activities.
10. **In case there is neither a communications plan nor a strategy, how is the social networks management made?**



11. Is the organization's Facebook page performance in line with the organization's expectations? How and why?

Our web team updates our facebook account based on the campaign (communication) strategies, which are aligned with our global communication strategy. Performance is measured foremost by user activity.

Appendix 4 | E-Mail from Oxfam

26/08/12

Gmail – Re: Fw: Master's Thesis Inquiry



Ana Ascensão Silva <ana.silva22@gmail.com>

Re: Fw: Master's Thesis Inquiry

2 messages

Education <Education@oxfam.org.uk>
To: ana.silva22@gmail.com

Thu, May 17, 2012 at 3:42 PM

Dear Ana

Thank you for contacting Oxfam regarding your thesis on International NGOs on Facebook. We are always pleased to hear from people who are interested in the work we do. As we have limited time and resources, however, and receive a large number of research requests, we are, unfortunately, unable to assist with research or complete questionnaires.

I would suggest having a look at our extensive website, where you will be able to find examples about how Oxfam uses social media which I hope will provide you with some of the information you need for your research: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>. For example we recently had a campaign called See for Yourself where one of our supporters travelled to Zimbabwe and used social media to publicise the campaign. There is more information about it on our website; <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/seeformyself>.

You may also like to look at our Policy and Practice website <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work> which highlights Oxfam's current policy, programme and research areas as well as providing access to over 3,000 published resources including books, policy papers, research reports, case studies and journal articles.

In addition, for an informative description of the year's activities, including Oxfam's marketing activities, you can view our Annual Report and Accounts for 2010/11 and previous years - at the following link: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/accounts/index.html>.

Thanks once again for your interest in our work and good luck with your research.

With best wishes

Charlotte Isles
Supporter Relations (Education)
Oxfam GB
Direct tel: +44 (0)300 200 1300
Fax: +44 (0)1865 472 225
E-mail: education@oxfam.org.uk
Website: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk>

P.S. We are currently responding to a serious food crisis across West Africa, affecting millions of people across the region. Oxfam is helping those most vulnerable. If you would like to find out more about how we are helping, please take a look at our website here: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam_in_action/emergencies/west-africa-food-crisis.html

P.P.S. We would love to hear what you think. Whether it is good, bad or indifferent, knowing what our supporters think is vital to us if we are going to continue to improve how we communicate to the people who make our work possible. The survey will take less than 2 minutes to complete and any information that you provide will be anonymous and confidential. <http://qnr.surveystack.com/s/18jfGgAPhbD.Xe3>

----- Original Email -----

----- Forwarded by Sally Dickinson/Communications/Oxfam on 15/05/2012 13:45 -----