MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

From a hashtag to a social impact community:

Train of Hope

verfasst von / submitted by

Monica Cristina Pascanu BA

Angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2017

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt	A 066 656
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt	Masterstudium CREOLE – Cultural Differences and Transnational Processes
Betreuer	Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Schweitzer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor Prof. Peter Schweitzer for his patience. Without his constant support and guidance, this thesis would not have been completed.

Secondly, I would also like to thank the community of Train of Hope for inspiring me to write this thesis and for allowing me to have an amazing research experience in the field. I could not even have conducted my research without their support.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my partner Alexandre for all his dedication and help he provided, encouraging me to bring this thesis to a final stage. Thank you!

Index

List of Figures

Abstract – English

In my current thesis I put a lot of focus on keywords such as 'engagement', 'community', 'hashtag', and 'cybersociety' to shape understandings of new ways of expression and societal action. These understandings span across numerous discourses, from public policy to social theory and from personal judgements to interpersonal relationships.

Instead of simply unpacking each of the up-mentioned keywords and tracing their inception and circulation through various arenas, or assuming that they represent fast-tracks to anthropological discovery, I wish to observe their potential in generating action: starting by measuring the fixity of words, to observing their impact on humanitarian experiences. Therefore, my journey into the minefield of buzzwords tries to offer a novel approach to digital anthropology as well as to analyze a multitude of aspects surrounding the emergence of a newly-constructed social community, the Train of Hope.

As thousands of migrants crossed the Austrian borders and started gathering in search for help and information at the central train station in Vienna in the fall of 2015, news and commentaries about their stories and struggles started to circulate widely through social media networks.

Through a theorization of the hashtag usage, I discuss how and why social media have become powerful platforms for documenting activism and challenging a civil society response to a 21st century crisis. I show how engaging in "hashtag activism" can create a social movement, and, additionally, I examine how online spaces formed by social media channels can provide strategic outlets for contesting and reimagining social bonds in newly formed communities.

The thesis combines approaches from digital anthropology and social movement research to investigate the semiotics of digital communities and to interrogate both the possibilities and the risks of engaging in a "hashtag ethnography."

Abstrakt – Deutsch

In dieser These konzentriere ich mich auf Schlüsselwörter wie "Engagement", "Gemeinschaft", "Hashtag" und "Cybersociety", um das Verständnis von neuen Ausdrucksformen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Handlungen zu gestalten. Diese Verständnisse erstrecken sich über zahlreiche Erörterungen, von der öffentlichen Politik zur Sozialtheorie und von persönlichen Urteilen bis hin zu zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen.

Es handelt sich hier nicht von einer Untersuchung der verschiedenen Begriffsbestimmungen der erwähnten Schlüsselwörter, ihrer Entstehung und Zirkulation in verschiedenen Zusammenhängen zu verfolgen oder anzunehmen, dass sie eine Laufbahn zur anthropologischen Entdeckung darstellen. Stattdessen werde ich ihr Potenzial bei der Erzeugung von Handlungen beobachten: Die Flexibilität der Interpretation von Wörtern bemessen und ihre Auswirkungen auf humanitäre ehrenamtliche Erfahrungen beobachten. Demzufolge versuche ich durch meine Reise in das Minenfeld von "Buzzwords", einen neuartigen Ansatz für Anthropologie im digitalen Zeitalter anzubieten und die Vielzahl von Aspekten zu analysieren, die das Entstehen einer neu gebauten sozialen Gemeinschaft, the Train of Hope, betreffen.

Als Tausende von Migranten die österreichischen Grenzen überquerten und im Herbst 2015 auf der Suche nach Hilfe und Information den Hauptbahnhof in Wien erreichten, wurden Nachrichten und Kommentare zu ihrer Notlage und Anstrengungen durch soziale Netzwerke weitgehend verbreitet.

Durch eine Theoretisierung des Hashtag-Gebrauchs bespreche ich, wie und warum Soziale Netzwerke zu Plattformen geworden sind, die wirksame zivilgesellschaftliche Reaktionen auf Krisen des 21. Jahrhunderts herausfordern und diesen Aktivismus dokumentieren. Somit demonstriere ich inwiefern "Hashtag-Aktivismus" eine soziale Bewegung erzeugen kann, und darüber hinaus untersuche ich wie Online-Bereiche, die durch Soziale Netzwerk-Kanäle entstehen, eine strategische Ansammlung zur Bestreitung und Neudefinierung von sozialen Bindungen in neu gebildeten Gemeinschaften anbieten kann.

Die Arbeit verbindet Ansätze aus der digitalen Anthropologie und der sozialen Bewegungsforschung, um die Semiotik der digitalen Gemeinschaften und die Chancen als auch die Risiken der "Hashtag-Ethnographie" zu untersuchen.

Chapter 1 – Introduction, methods and theoretical background

1.1 Introduction

> "Daring to study a community by applying both the classical and digital ethnographic methods, pushing the boundaries of the "broadcast" model of dissemination enables us to go beyond academia, beyond disciplines and beyond the standard written production of academic scholarship." (Pink 2016:14)

As we are now living in one of these periods of temporal acceleration, it is vital to explore new manners in which one can account for the digital to be irrevocably embedded in our world. Therefore, in order to update and expand what processes such as fieldwork and digital ethnography stand for, anthropologists suggest to challenge the existing frames of theorizing the digital society (Marres 2013; Horst and Miller 2012; Pink 2016; Boellstorff 2008).

Marres (2013) disrupts previously set parameters affirming that digital ethnography cannot be reduced to "simply theorizing the digital society and respectively, applying traditional social methods to determine components of digital social life" (Via Pink 2016:6). In this sense, a solution is to leave from the premises that "relations between social life and its analysis are changing in the context of digitization"(*ibidem.*) and a viable lead is to acknowledge digital ethnography as a form of interdisciplinary engagement.

Digital ethnography brings forward unprecedented methods of doing research and depending on the interests surrounding the research questions, it can take a variety of forms. The infrastructures that digital media rely upon need to be powered by a reliable energy source to foster a secure environment and an ethical approach of the studies. For instance, in the context of social media research, one must ensure an excellent internet connection at a decent speed, to experience in the most efficient way the interactions with the studied material and audience.

In my current thesis I put a lot of focus on key words such as 'engagement', 'community', 'hashtag', and 'cybersociety' to shape understandings of new ways of expression and societal action. These understandings span across numerous discourses, from public policy to social theory and from personal judgements to interpersonal relationships.

Instead of simply unpacking each of the up-mentioned keywords and tracing their inception and circulation through various arenas, or assuming that they represent fast-tracks to anthropological discovery, I wish to observe their potential in generating action: starting by measuring the fixity of words, to observing their impact on humanitarian experiences. Therefore, my journey into the minefield of buzzwords tries to offer a novel approach to digital anthropology as well as to analyze a multitude of aspects surrounding the emergence of a newly-constructed social community, the Train of Hope.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis begins with the presentation of the state of the art in the domain of digital anthropology, visual methods and continues with detailing facts and concepts about my research and analysis of the gathered data.

In the second part of the study, I look at the digital aspects of my research that took place in two environments: on- and offline. This part sets the basis for understanding what triggered or stood as building blocks for the development of the community of Train of Hope. It would also be the answer to my first research question and partially for the second question. The responses to the rest of the research queries are elaborated throughout the third chapter, which looks more thoroughly at the societal impact that the emergence of this organization produced, from both a macro and a micro scale.

Finally, the conclusions sum up the entire argument of my thesis, touching upon the future implications of this study and Train of Hope in general as an online memory place.

1.3 Research Question and Objectives

I am interested in capturing and dismantling the experience of the Train of Hope volunteers, understanding it as "the flow of everyday life punctuated by moments of fulfillment" (Pink 2016:20). Preceding definitions of experience had been tackled as unfiltered, mere and mostly relying on after-the-event reflections (Geertz 1986). In reaction to this, Throop (2003) encourages ethnographers to open up the definition to multiple forms of experience, especially as an analytical concept.

Encompassing own experiences as ways of producing ethnographic knowledge, through sensorial functions, imagination and emotions, cultural studies scholars begin to rely on ethnographic immersion in their attempt to identify concepts associated with sensorial and emotional occurrences. This way, one can facilitate discussions about a variety of experiences, empathize with research participants and articulate theories that will help further academics to enrich their own research efforts (Pink 2016).

The first question one could ask, is why I chose right from the beginning to look at Train of Hope's presence on the internet, and specifically picked Facebook to be one of the two research places. The theory behind it resumes to my willingness to closely follow the development of an online social movement, triggered by a simple hashtag (#TrainofHope) toward its transformation into a highly operational organization of volunteers. It managed with scarce resources to raise awareness and develop an international network of contacts which ultimately may help the transition or family reunification of refugees arriving in Europe.

Moreover, it has been fascinating to observe proof that "[…] there is strong evidence that persons mobilized for a social movement tend to be well integrated into social and organizational networks" (Oliver 1983: 141). Even if those networks, which Oliver talks about are not necessarily internet-based, it can still be applied to theories concerning Train of Hope, because most of the people that came to volunteer for this social cause have been mobilized through Facebook.

Facebook keeps a 24/7 record of the activities, meaning that an anthropologist can access the platform and interact with its members whenever possible. Hereby, I

observed the social media activities of the page called *Train of Hope - Hauptbahnhof Wien #hbfvie*. In this case, Facebook's timeline is seen as the virtual memory place which provides the history of the organization. Through recording my weekly experiences of the online representation, I immersed into an online environment, allowing for deep introspection as well as gathering tangible data by answering to questions such as:

- *How did Train of Hope build its community?*
- *How does Train of Hope communicate online and with what impact?*
- *What kind of discrepancies can be noted between the online community and the physical one?*

"The ways we use our senses, and the ways we create and understand the sensory world, are shaped by culture. Perception is informed not only by the personal meaning a particular sensation has for us, but also by the social values it carries" (Howes and Classen 2011 Via Pink 2016:21). It is argued that if one can discern the operationalization of a group's sensorium (or sensory apparatus), then one can understand its culture and how it manifests. Tim Ingold (2000) builds his anthropological research on the idea that experience itself cannot solely fit into verbal categories of expression. Consequently, he suggests that anthropologists ought to consider at each step unspoken layers of sensorial experience which are conveyed and can be grasped only through immersion. This process brings to the surface characteristics about a new world (in our case the virtual world) which can particularly be isolated through a meshwork of our senses.

Sensory approaches have fostered an increased interest in studying experience of everyday life, activities and infrastructure within digitally constructed environments.

1.4 Literature review and Theoretical framework

a. Digital anthropology and the study of communities

The days when anthropology solely offered an insightful perspective of a particular culture along with its social structure and relational networks are long gone. Nowadays, the discipline opens us to new ways of not only seeing the world(s) more or less in the vicinity of our daily routes. But, anthropologists choose to build arguments in order to shed light and reflect on precise phenomena by doing multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork or immerse themselves into heavily technologically-mediated environments, to explore additional forms of sensorial cognition. They all call for novel approaches that emerge from the meshwork of all human dominant senses.

The Train of Hope initiative was founded at the point when thousands of refugees arrived unexpectedly in Vienna over the summer months of 2015. Exponentially, every day more and more volunteers from the civil society started to help, as the word spread on social media. On the current research project, I follow up on previous theories regarding approaches to digital anthropology themes.

Postill and Pink (2012) bring an alternative to existing literatures concerning the nature of the internet as an ethnographic site, by advancing a fresh approach to internet ethnography, moving away from a concept of online community, and toward concepts of routine, movement, and sociality.

Postill and Pink offer an insightful model for internet ethnography. They are an inspiration for my research as they have conducted fieldwork in both on and offline among political activists in Barcelona. Their intake on online-triggered social movements proves that online activities are not assigned to a single platform. Groups can interact on diverse pages, channels and communities, therefore, following the movement of the group on diverse platforms through hashtags and hyperlinks is an important aspect in studying how social systems really work on the internet.

Here, internet activity must not be imagined to occur within a bounded area. The authors reject the use of "community" as a descriptor of sociality for the reason that "it brings with it implications of spatial boundedness and the creation of a single social unit" (idem.:26). Instead, they see this term to express the need for open edge, where individual actors are connected across boundaries to form the picture of a movement, a community in constant motion and evolution. As the world has increasingly expanded and young people feel the pressure of having to become independent very soon in their lives while being part of an urban anonymous crowd, the need of belonging in a community has become more popular.

The feelings of safety, acceptance and belongingness have been reinforced in the age of Facebook groupings. "What almost all users say about their pattern of friending on Facebook is that they are loath to include people that they have not met in person. Friending usually begins by replicating a core group of offline friends but it quickly expands to include pretty much anyone that a person did at some time or other know personally, even if they have subsequently lost touch with them" (Miller 2011:182).

For instance, visual identities formed on Facebook are vital to highlight the way a community expresses its culture and its members' profiles. "What this example of the effective distancing of the camera-operator illustrates, is that visual anthropologists should be concerned with what is anthropological about film, TV, the Internet and a whole range of other media as media. A focus on the relations they mediate and engender is an important and necessary component of any use of them as techniques. What is important are the relations of communication…" (Wright 1998:19).

In this case, the community of Train of Hope creates a continuous timeline of 'history in the making' where the volunteers who form the social media team, update the Facebook page on a daily basis with photos, videos and personal stories of members and bring forward fragments of the realities on the ground. By maintaining a vital link between the virtual world and the physical place, members of Train of Hope manage to build a distinctive and unique visual communication which further helps the community to grow.

As anthropologist Paula Uimonen describes the process of visual expression on Facebook, she argues that members "engage in the social construction of reality, crafting their digitally mediated identities in interaction with their online social relations" (2013:122). The particular social space that Facebook offers, is a predominantly visual environment. This characteristic comes as an ideal feature for narrating stories of the daily activities of a community, presenting profiles and backgrounds of its members or engaging with the general audience, in order to facilitate the humanitarian needs of the organization.

"We have reached the point where Facebook may be regarded as providing a crucial medium of visibility and public witnessing. It gives us a moral encompassment within which we have a sense not only of who we are but of who we ought to be. Facebook is normative not just in the sense of a consensual netiquette, but also as a force for witnessing the moral order of the self - not for all people, and not necessarily. But without some explanation of this ilk it is hard to account for what often appears as a compulsion to place things under a generic public gaze rather than to post them to any particular person. An argument as this one would render Facebook anything but superficial. It may perhaps, for some, be equivalent to the presence of the divine as witness in their lives" (Miller 2011:180). Moreover, it helps create social ties where the volunteers feel connected to each other both online and offline, contributing to the feeling of *boundness* and *being-togetherness* involved for a common purpose.

Space is a meaningful and vital concept in my observations, as they unfold in both online and physical environments. "Social space proves to be a subtle concept. It is increasingly evident in contemporary social life that people may be close to others socially but distant physically; or close in physical terms but distant socially" (Amid and Caputo 2015:185). What I find even more interesting to analyze is how the space of Train of Hope has been socially constructed from and through an online community on Facebook, to a physical place, where the bond between the two environments still remains vital for a flawless function of the organization.

Heather Horst (2008) admits that it is a challenge to not take for granted the relationship between the two worlds created in physical, respectively online places. Moreover, it is crucial to remark that "digital living will include less and less

dependence upon being in specific place at specific time, and the transmission of place itself will start to become possible. In the post-information age, since you may live and work at one or many locations, the concept of an "address" now takes on new meaning" (Negroponte 1995:238). One should not privilege one space as being more authentic than the other one, but rather, to see beyond the silver linings and to compare the forms in which the two come together and diverge in different situations or points in time. Social space allows for fluidity, encourages thinking as it exists only in the imaginary of an individual or group, framing a concept that "people act not through but with" (*idem.*).

Such a place encourages sociability, the tendency to aim for the company of like-minded others, create new friendships and reconsider one's place in society through the lens of social exchange that carries a beneficial effect for both parties. These elements have been the building blocks for Train of Hope to become and identify itself, not only as an ephemeral association of people, but also as an organization.

These two latter states of existence for Train of Hope offer a novel way of understanding the multi-faceted forms in which people come together, and the nature of the mixed agglomerations that are emanated from their sociality. Anthropologist Gabriela Vargas-Cetina zooms in similarly constructed associations that are non-corporate, do not function based on written rules nor are they an outcome of self-perpetuating collective subjects. "Such associations are ephemeral in the sense that their members regard them as contextual and fluxional, and do not expect them to last indefinitely. Their membership, furthermore, is voluntary; whether or not members are formally registered, their internal governance is weak (their figurations of authority

contingent), and their structure, memberships, aims and purposes change continuously. Married to new communication technologies, one might expect the significance of such ephemeral organization to increase further" (Vargas-Cetina Via Amid and Caputo 2015:187).

Another concept developed by Hannerz (1992) proposes to look at the social organization of culture as part of a global ecumene. As the whole world is re-wired by the power of Internet, anthropologists nowadays must re-think their perspective on the standard formula of social organizations development. 'Collectiveness' in local urban spaces, such as in the case of Train of Hope, has emerged from a larger decentralized global context of mass migration, as a response to a human emotion to help, offer shelter and food to refugees from the Middle East and Africa.

On the same argumentation line, Hirst highlights a similar phenomenon to what I am demonstrating in this paper, more specifically, the way in which social media plays a vital role in mobilizing masses to act on a certain cause. In his case, the author takes a look at the Arab Spring uprisings in 2010-2011 and at the discourses surrounding new 'theories' about how and why platforms like Facebook and Twitter may create or enable certain actions or even revolutionary events.

It is very interesting getting inspiration from his way of exemplifying the way actual reality can be interpreted through the use of social media, whether or not the truth is in safe hands inside a physical community or an online community. "…social media revolution covers up the lack of preparedness and historical knowledge […people] rely on an easy to digest narrative based on available facts and not requiring any difficult historical contextualizing. The Princeton historian Edward Tenner is credited

with coining the phrase that best describes this type of bias: 'the bias of convenience''' (Rosenberg & Feldman Via Hirst 2012:135).

Hirst also argues that it has become almost impossible for governments to suppress actions and spontaneous movements which have as base form of gathering in an online environment. At the same time, one should also be aware of the weaknesses of the internet which guise under security and surveillance actions. "The potential for ultimate democratization, however, is only a potential. I have, I hope, demonstrated that the Internet bears risks as well as rewards for insurgents, and in this area as in others there is at most a 'soft technological determinism' at work" (Kreimer Via Horst 2012:162).

> *Computers will literally work for both individuals and for groups. I see the same decentralized mind-set growing in our society, driven by young citizenry in the digital world. The traditional centralist view of life will become a thing of the past. The nation-state itself is subject to tremendous change and globalization. Governments fifty years from now will be both larger and smaller. Europe finds itself dividing itself into smaller ethnic entities while trying to unite economically. The forces make it too easy to be cynical and dismiss any broad stroke attempt at world unification. But in the digital world, previously impossible solutions become viable.*

> (Negroponte 1995:240)

b. Visual anthropology

Up until this point, the domination of the visual and physical field has proven itself not to provide anymore a holistic image of society, as the era of the virtual engagement has developed new modalities of extracting meaning from unknown territories and their peoples. "One should not assume, though, that digital visual anthropology and mainstream anthropology are now more closely aligned simply because their practitioners use similar equipment: it is what is done with the equipment rather than the simple fact of its use that identifies a practice as visual anthropology" (Pink 2011:213).

The fact that a large part of my research was conducted in a virtual world, a theory which aids to a better understanding of the evolution of Train of Hope is a theory coined by Steve Woolgar (2002). Virtual society represents a term which describes the upshot of the new technologies, a vision of the world commodified by technology, which sits alongside concepts such as network society, information society and global society.

The idea that Train of Hope, as a social network, was born and managed in the online sphere, has brought me to this specific article. Here, the concept of network has been receiving a large amount of attention over the last decade, though it has been interpreted in various ways across social sciences. Within anthropology, at the beginning of the 1980s the topic was tackled by Hannerz who recognized its potential to benefit the "anthropological growth industry" (Hannerz 1980:186). His observations have turned out to be a kick-starter for a new form of anthropological

analysis. Hannerz's perspective has placed the concept of network as a flexible and accessible modality to look into the urban sphere.

Despite the term's earlier ambiguous connotation, experts such as Knox, Savage and Harvey have stepped up and persuaded that 'network' ought to be considered as an advantageous medium where social research can be conducted. Though, they also acknowledged that it is important to bear in mind "the limitations of networks as an explanatory tool" (Knox, Savage and Harvey 2006:133).

Moreover, Thompson (1995) engages in the study of the role that communication media played in the formation of modern societies, while refining a distinctive social theory of communication media, and its impact. He argues that advancement of communication media has re-shaped the space–time basis of social life, updating ways of action and interaction which are no longer connected to the sharing of a common locale. For my own research context, I find Thompson's work relevant in order to show that ramifications of such transformations can trespass a variety of social aspects. By gathering personal kinds of experiences and motivations, an anthropologist can extrapolate how a certain community can make a change and set up itself up as a role model for other countries dealing with the same migration issues. This phenomenon empowers newly-created communities based on their visibility in public domain. His study places (social) media among a set of disciplines concerned with the rise, development and structural characteristics of communities and their futures.

Technologically transformed futures inquire major and profound changes in societies. Still, the use of this term 'virtual society', possesses a distinguished virtue: "it connotes an especially marked contrast with the existing state of affairs; the virtual is so

different and so transformative that it stands in polar opposition to the real" (Woolgar 2002:3). At the same time, this quality has the advantage of pushing us to rethink what we have been assuming or taking for granted about the nature of the real society, and what in this context would the virtual counterpart stand for. It is in our tendency to uncritically accept different kinds of supposed effects of technology. However, the experience of use often helps to create a more concrete idea of how technologies can benefit or alter our daily lives. Thereby, digital anthropology mainly expresses the use of digital technologies and resources for research purposes. It is "concerned with visualisation and digitisations of knowledge; with the cultural construction of audiovisual information and communication technologies, or identity formation within new media architectures; with the relationship between cultural identity and knowledge and the technological contexts in which they are formed; with the crafting of experience and participation in digital, virtual and online contexts - in brief, with the cultural underpinning of information society" (Via Cohen & Salazar 2005:6).

c. Immersion and transduction

Due to the rise of new digitally constructed social platforms, lived experiences have been rendered possible in a set of ways never completely understood before. These platforms have developed into ideal sites for ethnographic work, where different modalities of *being with the ethnographic participants*, go way off the range of interviews or simply 'being in the fieldwork' (Marcus 2008). Nowadays, we talk about these previous methods of gathering data in relation to digital contexts as well as forms

of engaging with diverse individuals and their experiences with digital media technologies.

Up until this point, the domination of the visual has proven itself to be way too simplistic and reductive when it comes to extracting meaning from unknown territories and their peoples.

For instance, one of the authors that inspired me to carry ethnographic observations within two distinctive spaces is Stefan Helmreich, with his text *An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography*. Hereby he challenges the limits of the human body and goes beyond them by calling upon a submersible vehicle. He aims to investigate the soundscapes of the seafloor, by descending as a cyborg into an eerie liquid world. "Submerging into the ocean almost seamlessly merges with a sense of submerging into sound—and into a distinctively watery soundscape" (2007:621). In a similar manner, I felt that my research required the same process of equipping oneself with the right technological devices in order to be able to access and experience the online world.

For Heimreich, this whole process induces a feeling of *immersion*, a new regime of seeing, where one can experience an unprecedented environment through a fluid interaction. An interaction that is meant to enhance human knowledge without the burden of paying attention to the visible, but rather on the contrary, to let go and immerse into a foreign cultural milieu that would absorb one's mind and body. His approach towards answering research questions does not involve visually assessing a certain locus, but rather "sounding, listening, and hearing" in order to "listen for that

which we usually only hear" (2007:629) and making translations with help from technological equipment. A type of exploration of the otherwise invisible, that opens up alternative participant-observation techniques, which undoubtedly will challenge the classic methodological assumptions, standardized modes and systems of sensing.

The author juggles with two apparently antithetical terms: *immersion* and *transduction*. Both participate in his innovative manner of coining the methodological aspect of creating an ethnographic study. The novelty he brings to the table helping me enrich this study, is the ethnographic method that allows for multi-sensorial observation, where *silence* can render as much meaning as any other form of cognition.

However, in order to make sense of the human's experience of silence, one must seek to become a cyborg: to unite powers with a machine which can mediate the transduction between the outside and the human interiority. This notion, I will further explore in my study case within a digitally constructed community, where one ought to possess the technological apparatus to be able to access social media platforms and observe these kinds of online experiences.

What does it mean to use the transduction ethnographic method while doing research within a chosen field? Anthropologists have always aimed to take an objective stance in drawing an accurate picture of a particular reality, to consequently upgrade it into a more general theory, that could then be applied to a larger scale.

However, this process is not facile to achieve, for the reason that the idea of just 'going native' (Malinowski 1922), to be one with what you are studying, implies a separate infrastructure of thought. Even though participant-observation as a method is

advertised as a deep introspection, a thick description of a socio-cultural field, the anthropologist might find themselves to be a *doubly marginalized* person. They are at the same time outside the home boundaries and knowledge, while also barely inside a whole new world which gradually enlarges and becomes less accessible, if one manages to immerse and blend into the study, unnoticeably. This situation could easily distort the researcher's feeling of belonging to a defined community, while at the same time could foster curiosity and determination to find their own place in the field. This translates into the opportunity to cover a 360 degrees view from where they could achieve a complex understanding on the matter.

So, transduction gets to represent an ideal form of ethnography which requires a translation between different physical media; a movement which leaves each medium 'intact' as it flows towards a purpose. And the indicated purpose reflects on transformation of the products of knowledge. Still, even if such a process seems utopian in a cosmos where social status, skin color, gender, educational background and even pure luck could put their mark on the quality of an ethnography, one can make use of transduction as a reminder that calls for increased attentiveness on the ways one is paying attention to the others.

On this exact argumentation line, Heimreich was inspired to emphasize an environment which cannot be explored or immersed into through the human visual apparatus. It can only be heard; transducted into knowledge by exclusively using a technologically mediated method. Just as participating and observing the social media interactions within a group as an ethnographer, noise, silence and sounds are rendered visible through prosthetic technologies.

If we think of the cyborg, as the human without the affect, one ought to reimagine how the thinking part can be *coded*, as coding requires translation and communication.

Consciousness could then easily become not only specific to the inner human but as a product of the locus in interaction with information, leaving no space for immersion. A perfect rationalization leading to immediacy, the spot where no more barriers would block the perception of reality. The ideal fieldwork could then be conducted by cyborgs that would not permit any kind of emotional subjectivity to interfere with the studied place. As no translation would be necessary, it would *speak* the same language with the study - simply merging with its data.

Wouldn't then be easier to install cameras all around the field one pursues to write about and just let the gathered data speak for itself? Though, then the *automatic-anthropologist* would only be able to hold historical facts and not ethnographic material. This method would only create more confusion and distinctive interpretations of what is being rendered visible through optical and (maybe) audible means.

Therefore, as Kittler (1997) puts it, as long as we have bodies, there is still place for friction and translation. Information cannot be inequitably implanted (not yet anyway) directly in our minds. Furthermore, analysis and criticism is vital to draw parallels, learn meaningful lessons and shape conclusions that ought to lead to a better understanding of the global diversity. Even though machines cannot become yet anthropologists, one can still use them as reliable allies which can make transduction possible.

Another author who similarly succeeded to observe a highly mediated perspective on reality is Natasha Schull (2014). In her study of the *Machine Zone*, she investigates a distinguished form of immersion, this time as an observer. Schull does not experience herself *the zone*, but feeds on conversations she carries with certain individuals who are prone to achieving the required level of addiction, concentration and self-control while playing the slot machine. Here, playing does not represent just the ephemeral, easy modality of being entertained by pushing buttons and being surprised while winning or losing games. These are not just players but gamblers, a notion which has its own *affordances,* coining a state of addiction. The machine as described by Schull's informants seems to possess human-like attributes, gaining agency only as an interaction with a person, in a space of dialogue. Another type of cyborg inviting through its realm to an intensely intimate connection where an individual desires to *cocoon* oneself. A place that is private enough, and at the same moment, out in a social scape, where one can feel comfortable to escape the daily pressure of responsibility and self-government.

This description of *the zone* highlights its immersive character, that once it is triggered in the same way as descending to the bottom of the ocean, it is almost impossible to instantly *return*, nor to remain the same person as before the immersion started.

Silence, also experienced in conducting online ethnographic work in virtual realities, carries meaning if one knows exactly how to listen to it, a multidimensionality which uncovered new manners of experiencing life. It is no more a synonym for 'lack of noise' but it stands for a distinguished kind of sound.

Consequently, immersion becomes an ambiguous state of *being otherwise*, a term which revolves around deeply subjective experiences that could hardly provide a scientific output. Unless, it could stand against the measurement conducted by something else than human senses - fact which has the potential to create additional boundaries in communicating results.

In Schull's view, the zone implies and can only come alive as a dialogue between the gambler and the machine. Here, the technical apparatus does not only impose a certain rhythm on individuals entering a casino, meaning that in order to satisfy one's perpetual dose of excitement that the zone has to offer, one must obey the machine's rules and timing. The slot machine has its own unequivocal affordance and seduces the gambler through its patterns of color, sounds, buttons, timing between each game, location inside the casino and respectively the casino's proximity from the individual's home or daily route. Compared to the present study, as I am working on a laptop in order to access the social media platforms, I must be aware of the needs of the technology that allows me to do my work. This means ensuring that the battery is charged, a Wi-Fi connection is available, its speed is decent enough to be able to watch videos and open multiple applications at the same time, and so on.

It is now technology's turn to catch up with the human needs - which inevitably leads to a vicious circle between the two. The behavior of machines follows the feedback provided by the user who is already accustomed to a given pattern. Technology providers have straightaway the intention to adjust to the customer's responses in order to accustom new personalities and behaviors which would consequently help enlarge

the market and generate larger profits, a theory that can easily be extrapolated to all social media platforms that exist today.

Furthermore, unlike Heimreich's personal expertise on the process of immersion, Schull provides what could be called a *double transduction*, as to explain how immersion happens in her study. What I mean by this statement, is that Schull is not directly involved - she does not provide a sense of the zone from her own encounter with it. Rather, she transduces the observed manifestations which her informants describe during their conversations. Additionally, the gamblers at their turn have to translate and put into a rational context the *irrational* phenomenon they are confronted with. This way, the reader stands in front of a generated form of knowledge which had passed through multiple media: machine to gambler, gambler talking face to face to the anthropologist, the author writing the book.

In effect, immersion cannot always stand as a reliable, objective manner of anthropological measurement of a certain experience. For instance, people could easily be manipulated towards immersing into an illusion. Be it the semblage that the gambling zone offers the proper type of escape sensation from the *I, who needs to make decisions* or the illusion of an idealized past where creation of more heavy industry equals economic growth and prosperity, ignoring alarming evidence that highlights irreversible environmental alteration. In both cases the affective side of the relation takes over the rational reasoning.

Therefore, it becomes clear that anthropology can maintain its status as a discipline having the authority to rationalize certain patterns of culture and society as Heimreich decisively argues, only by using a transductive method of ethnographic fieldwork.

Although immersion is an ideal for detecting the substance of a researched subject, there will always be mediation. Each way of looking at reality or describing the extraordinary, especially with an unnatural process such as being in an online world, cannot become ethnographic material unless it is transduced to suit both the perception and competence of the author, as well as to be understandable for the reader.

1.5 Fieldwork Methods

a. Participant observation

I have chosen the method of participant observation because it helps provide an insight into practices and meanings as they naturally unfold. It is interpreted to be an ideal tool for researchers, because it allows for "participating in everyday life and becoming well-known to the informants" (Boellstorff & Co 2012:65). Participant observation is a vital resource in conducting ethnographic research. It ensures direct access to data by having informal conversations with the volunteers, while both of us work on similar tasks, allowing at the same time space for observations of the activities, movements and surroundings.

Participant observations allow me to identify, besides daily practices involved in the studied community, beliefs and intimate details that build upon the volunteers'

motivations, which otherwise might not have been that easily shared during a formal, recorded interview.

At the same time, one of the most challenging experiences was to re-think the ethnographic field research methods and apply them within two different environments, digital and physical and further, to interpret the distinct sets of results.

Wielding participant observations within the extensive Train of Hope community on Facebook represented a great obstacle, not only due to lack of physical space but also, because of the large amount of information. This implied an intertwine between reading about relevant activities (posts and comments from key members of the community that have a major say) and activities which hold very little added value to my research (promotional materials from other non-related sources or people non-related to the Train of Hope's mission).

During my participant observations on Facebook, I was logged in with my personal account. Therefore, there have been situations when complete immersion into the reality of the online community was disrupted by mundane interventions of friends and news reports appearing on my timeline; distractions that are hardly unavoidable due to the nature of Facebook as a product. However, an advantage of doing research on social media is that one does not have to physically travel to the field, nor to adapt to a certain schedule.

Social media's flexibility allows its users to operate in their own rhythm. Not unlike other community pages on Facebook, Train of Hope did as well establish a set of guidelines or rules on what exactly it requires from its members in order to freely

express their opinions, participate and contribute in a constructive manner to the community. In the "About" section of the official page (Train of Hope - Hauptbahnhof Wien #hbfvie) the administrators added a paragraph called "Social Media Spielregeln" (tr. Social Media Rules of the Game) where it is highlighted (in German language) that the Train of Hope team reserves the right to delete comments if they:

" - Are racist, pornographic, obscene, inhumane or offensive;

- Promote violence;

- Violate the rights of third parties, including personality, copyrights or privacy;

- Seek to mobilize campaigns and rallies of any political direction contain quotations without giving a source or author;

- Contain addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses or other personal information;

- Are meant to be used for advertising purposes or related to improper content on other Web Sites;

- Are entered twice or consisting of parts;

- Constitute spam;

- More misspellings include, as our own posts *wink emoji*."

At first, before I began my participant observations, I had to "like" their official Facebook page as well as subscribe to it to receive notifications of updates in real-time. Later on, after volunteering a few times for them at the Hauptbahnhof, I was invited by a team-coordinator to join the private group, solely dedicated to active members, called "Train of Hope - INTERN". On this "Closed group" on Facebook, I could witness and take part in more private discussions that mainly consisted of debating on how day to day operations should evolve. For instance, whether it is

relevant to build a legal framework to express what Train of Hope stands for in a larger social context and as well in relation to its stakeholders: media, official donors, volunteers, core members and others.

Research questions that I focused on during this stage revolved around the idea of how do online members interact with each other. Moreover, I was interested in figuring out who manages the posts and controls the conversation; how does the admin team promote activities on the page, and what kind of materials and speeches they use to motivate more members to volunteer more often.

In November, when the Train of Hope activities were exceeding everyone's expectations and when the inflow of asylum seekers was reaching higher numbers every single day, the daily average number of volunteers at the train station was around 100. At this point, when I joined the private group dedicated solely to active members, it consisted of over 1000 individuals. This enormous number was not reflecting the need of the organization for having consistency within the group. Now the group includes 233 members, after the action of removing members who were not involved anymore on a daily basis at the Hauptbahnhof Wien premises. Administrators describe this closed group as "a medium for exchange between active members of Train of Hope or persons who are involved with Train of Hope within the field of refugee relief".

As a great number of the active members are not German-speaking, all posts including the description of the page and guidelines are written in both English and German language. "The internal Facebook group is not an official forum for Train of Hope in

terms of the association and therefore will not be used for official statements or announcements. Purpose, rules and tips as well as guidelines for administrators and members of the internal Facebook group are described in the Rules and Guidelines".

The main purpose of this page is to exchange and information on current topics related to refugee relief and asylum systems, to network and connect with other active members, to post about related projects, organizations or emergency shelters, as well as personal requests related to refugee relief (e.g. private initiatives, projects, ideas, etc.).

The administrators (short: admins) of the internal facebook group take over the duty to monitor compliance with rules and guidelines of the content as well as looking out for the purposeful operation and clarity of the internal facebook group. New admins are decided unanimously by the current admins. It follows from the above, that the evaluation of posts and comments rest with the admins. They are enabled to decline and delete posts or comments, if at their own discretion necessary. In doing so, it is imperative to conform with the rules and guidelines for the internal facebook group. Admins however can only remove or block members from the internal facebook group, if a clear violation of rules and guidelines are occurring and the majority of the admins agree to this measure. Removals/blocks can be executed immediately by only one admin, when exigent circumstances occur (e.g. hacked profiles). Subsequently it must be catched up on the process as named (violation of rules, majority vote) above within 48 hours and the remaining group members have to be informed.

Members. New members must be suggested by current members of the internal Facebook group. Thereupon one of the admins will get in contact with the person to be added, to clarify that (1) the person invited to the internal facebook group actually wants to become a member and (2) the reason to become a member of the internal facebook group is closely or widely associated with Train of Hope. Based on the clarification of both points, the administrators will decide on the request by majority vote.

(excerpt from Rules and Guidelines document

of the Train of Hope's private Facebook group).

These up-stated rules reinforce the fact that the internal Facebook group is not an official communication forum for the association, as it is also accessible for persons who are not full members of the association. Though all of the board members are as well members of the Facebook group, all requests directed to the board normally will not be answered on Facebook, but via e-mail at vorstand@trainofhope.at or, in case of urgency, by telephone. "The internal Facebook group will NOT be used for official statements and/or news in matters of the association itself", however, this group is vital from a participant observer's point of view, for the reason that it brings forward characteristics regarding group dynamics. This platform holds conversations and intense arguments which reveal internal conflicts. It also revealed the complex process that was triggered immediately before the introduction of new rules, into a community that managed to successfully develop itself for almost 4 months without any guidance, nor a well-defined hierarchical structure.

On both sites, I commented on posts in order to participate just like other members, carrying conversations both publicly and privately with other members. Most of the active members got to know about my work from our talks at Hauptbahnhof, simply regularly seeing me around the venue or by hearing about me from other volunteers. Furthermore, the private group consists of only 233 members (as of August 1st 2016) compared to the official Facebook page of Train of Hope, that gathered almost 50 thousand fans from all over the world at that point.

My personal methods of collecting data during the participant observation sessions consisted in taking screenshots of conversations, photos, and posts within both examined pages. Moreover, for developing an analytical thought on both the physical and the online places, I took field notes and kept a field diary, bringing together relevant aspects about places and people I interacted with, as well as exercising my own thoughts and feelings during the entire process.

b. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews provided the ideal form of collecting data for my research, taking advantage of the possibility to interact face-to-face with volunteers working at different levels for the Train of Hope at their location in Wiener Hauptbahnhof. In this manner, I was able to correlate my findings with previously gathered materials from discussions carried online with volunteers. It also provided me the means to closely analyze, cluster and compare the profiles and motivations of my interviewees to one another.

Consequently, the interviews are transcribed (and some of them translated into English from German language) in the scope of decoding the similarities within the group's motivation to stick together and work towards a common goal, as well as extracting the unique characteristics that each volunteer brought to the team. This also helped understand the lines that would lead towards inner tensions and an eventual breakdown of the organization.

Since most of the members and my main target group for the study were the active volunteers, directly helping at the station, the interviews took place predominantly in Vienna, on the Train of Hope's premises (Wiener Hauptbahnhof - gate 12, generously provided by the OeBB). However, during the winter months I also conducted interviews through Skype and Instant Messaging on Facebook, as there were no more refugees arriving to Vienna and help was no more needed. In this manner, I was able to reconnect with participants I had personally worked with or interviewed in-person, and directly follow-up with their thoughts about the future of Train of Hope, as well as their personal plans after volunteering more or less continuously for almost 4 months within this community.

A similar comparison between interviews conducted online versus face-to-face was made by Curasi (Via Gunter 2002). He observed that under the right conditions, online interviews have the ability to provide an easier access to follow-up conversations and also to eliminate the need for transcription, as the respondents already contribute in a written form. "Respondents who participate online may allow for easier member checks, a technique of testing hypotheses, data, preliminary categories and interpretations with informants. This method is believed to be one of the single most

crucial techniques for establishing credibility" (Guba and Lincoln 1989; Wallendorf and Belk 1989 via Gunter 2002:236).

Hence, on one hand I conducted both informal interviews at Wiener Hauptbahnhof, as well as semi-structured interviews with some long-time volunteers. From the beginning, the plan was to have two interviews with each kind of volunteer: newcomers, long-term volunteers, core team members, social media volunteers and the founders of Train of Hope.

This plan was developed considering Fife's argument that a semi-structured interview is "an attempt to capture something of the 'control' of structured interviews without the need to use closed-ended questions or force people into the role of a "respondent" rather than that of an "initiator" of information" (2005:94). Keeping in mind that at the beginning of my research I possessed little knowledge about the volunteers and the field, I could hardly anticipate topics of discussion, reactions, and eventually their motivations for being part of a virtually gathered community. For that reason, I had to encourage people to talk about their concrete work at the Train of Hope, as well as their personally-driven aspiration and figures, that motivated their choice to volunteer.

Basically, the foremost aim of my study is to examine the newly formed identity of a community which relies on social media as its core engine. This is an experience that could not otherwise be caught by any structurally controlled questions and answers. Hence, having done the mandatory literature research and keeping the theoretical frames idea in mind, I managed to generate a set of questions that would help guide the interviews.

Every interview that I recorded always started as a colloquial interaction between myself and a member working side by side with me on a similar task. For instance, during the time I would volunteers at the tea and coffee section, I would casually begin a discussion with a fellow helper, touching topics such as their place of origin, their background, whether they had a permanent job somewhere else or studies in progress, and some questions about their time spent at Train of Hope.

All these inquiries were meant to ultimately lead towards asking them if they would offer me approximately 45 minutes for a recorded interview, that will further develop around their motivation to be part of this movement and that will eventually be used as material for my MA thesis. Fortunately, every single time I asked for an interview, I received a positive response and to my surprise, a large amount of enthusiasm from each member towards helping me with my research. So, after casually chatting with a respective member, I would propose a date and a time to carry the interview. Once all settled in a quieter corner of the station, I would ask for permission to start the recording and I would begin the interview with warm-up questions, sometimes repeating the already asked ones, simply to maintain a good flow of the conversation and be able to later remember all the relevant details.

The second part of the interview would generally consist of questions related to their work at Train of Hope, and depending on the function of each participant. I would then guide the queries in such a way, to draw a clear timeline from the moment he or she found out about Train of Hope, continuing with the moment when they first joined the community and started working at the station, up until present tasks and finally some

thoughts on their personal perspective regarding the way they see the evolution of the community over the upcoming months/years.

Each interview was personalized and tailored to fit the background and function of each interviewee. For example, with members that were part of the social media moderators (or administrators) I would focus more on aspects of their implication within the online community, touching upon topics that related to member's behaviors inside the Facebook community, in comparison to their expressivity outside the virtual sphere. Furthermore, I managed to conduct a couple of expert-interviews with professional helpers, carrying years of relevant experience: psychologists who were both volunteering a few hours daily for Train of Hope and at the same time, working in hospitals or private businesses.

1.6 Data Collection and Techniques

To coherently structure my research and ultimately draw answers to the research question, I am looking into the organization Train of Hope, a local social movement that is focused on helping refugees at the Central Train Station. It is both a real place in Vienna, as well as a digital space, because the organization has a vital connection to its social media presence. Through social media, Train of Hope has managed so far to recruit volunteers, raise donations, and share daily activities, while creating a platform for people to talk and exchange ideas, where history is in the making.

Therefore, right from the beginning, without having a well-defined research question I had begun my participant observations, purposely to understand and explore ways in

which I could connect the dots of a community in the making that has a strong presence in the online and offline. Firstly, I began by officially joining the organization through registering as an active volunteer at the "check-in point" located in Wiener Hauptbahnhof (Gate 12). Day 1 at the Train of Hope mainly consisted of observing, taking notes and exploring the location, discerning the ways in which the physical place is structured into smaller "workstations" as well as broadly figuring out each of their roles.

The same day, I became part of the Train of Hope's virtual audience by "liking" their official Facebook page (facebook.com/hbfvie) and subscribing to receive notifications on my personal profile whenever the page makes a post. From this point on, after reading about the manner in which the whole idea of Train of Hope came to be, from a hashtag to a physical community, I decided to explore in depth the underlying processes that allowed for the emergence of this community.

a. Online ethnography

From the inception, I had been stepping concomitantly in the shoes of a classical ethnographer as well as a virtual-world ethnographer. Having to study two different environments simultaneously, my only choice was to explore my creativity and base my research methods on incorporating techniques from a variety of sources; from anthropologists that managed to immerse themselves in a virtual world as well as a physical one. Following Karen O'Reilly's approach, ethnography stands as an "iterative-inductive research (that evolves in design through the study), drawing on a family of methods... that acknowledges the role of theory as well as the researcher's

own role and that views humans as part object/part subject" (2005:3). Yet, through digitizing ethnography, new conditions apply such as "direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives".

Firstly, in an online sphere this translates into a careful watching of what happens: digitally tracking individual members of a community, asking them to share their social media practices and then compare and analyze their motivations and involvement within that digital community. Secondly, listening to what they express digitally, reading, participating and asking questions whenever necessary through public comments or private messages. Ultimately, the goal is to deliver a "richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience" through a diversity of output methods i.e. ethnographic writing, videotaping, photography, blogging (*ibidem.*).

Throughout the time, new technologies evolve, providing various ways of engaging with the research fields, rendering as well our practices as ethnographers to transform towards incorporating these newly emerged theories about the world we live in. One of the pioneering researchers into this particular field is Christine Hine who challenged the status quo of classical ethnography, endorsing the added-values of the Internet: it enables us to rethink traditional categories of `culture' and `society'. Her work stands as a building block for defining digital ethnography as an interdisciplinary approach towards understanding the consequences of the digital media through the use of Internet and technology in general. Therefore, her suggested techniques for writing a virtual ethnography helped me immerse into my field site, make use of technology

such as my laptop and a smartphone to engage with participants, observe them, and take part in events organized on Facebook.

To collect data for my sample, I called upon Hine's advice that "ethnography is thought of as one of the most open of research approaches, which adapts itself to the social situations it finds. This does not mean, however, that ethnographers just wander around aimlessly: Ethnography may be adapted, but it is still purposive" (2008:6).

b. Visual methods

In my quest to catch this perpetual state of transformation and evolution of the group dynamics, I chose to use visual methods (such as digital photography, video and audio recordings) to assist such processes and be able to track them in a coherent manner.

Anthropologist Sarah Pink (2011) also looks at the link between visual anthropology and digital media. She presents a debate that has begun around 30 years ago, when the pioneers of contemporary digital visual anthropology were emerging. Her contribution helps me explore how digital media have enabled anthropologists throughout time to gain access into online communities and study visuals that stand as empirical data for their research projects. Pink argues that digital media has become indispensable to three areas of visual anthropology: as an element of research methods; as a type of 'visual culture' for analysis; and as an instrument of representing and disseminating (audio) visual knowledge (Pink 2011: 213).

Pink also offers a series of relationship types that can occur between visual anthropology and digital media. Visual anthropology involves five different sets of interdependent practices:

1. Study of nonlinguistic forms of communication - making use of visual technologies for gathering data;

2. Study of visual products - as communicative activities of a group;

3. Use of visual media for presenting data and research findings;

4. Activist/applied strand of visual anthropology - potential role as a public anthropology;

5. Visuals as pedagogical projects.

Throughout this research, I made use of the first four practices described above, not only as a personal modality to collect memories of happenings through recordings and pictures, but as well to ensure accuracy of the digitally obtained results from participant observations. "Photos are material evidence of connectedness to what is now "past". The more photos connect, the more they are valued. Photos are stories about connections through time, affirming the existence and significance of the past in the present" (Macdonald 2003:236).

"We suffer [...] from forms of agency mediated via images of ourselves, because as social persons, we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our

surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, and our agency" (Gell 1998:103).

Gell's and Macdonald's arguments pin-point the way in which we ought to understand images not simply visually, but in social sensorial relations in which they are enmeshed as objects. I believe that through the process of taking photos with my phone during fieldwork at Hauptbahnhof Wien and by taking screenshots of conversations and shared visuals on the Train of Hope's Facebook page, I help enrich the understanding of the group dynamics of this particular community in two different environments: on- and offline. Digital photography catches history in the making, while also bringing evidence to the fact that Train of Hope is a flourishing community, with volunteers that connect and form stronger bonds in time.

Therefore, I am theorizing the emergence of Train of Hope as a digitally mobilized community which eventually transformed into a social movement, meant not only to help refugees arriving in Vienna, but also draw attention and raise awareness on a human migration process which modern Europe had not been prepared to handle. The accelerated flow of asylum seekers into the Old Continent has revealed a series of flaws in national and European legislation, which hinder the procedure of successfully managing a humanitarian crisis of this scale.

Hereby, Train of Hope came to be as a response to the lack of reactiveness of a particular state government (Austria in this case), where a group of activists were brought together by the instantaneous power of communication on a social media platform. By activists I mean "those persons who commit a relatively large amount of

time and effort to movement activities" and consequently that from the beginning are "part of the leadership cadre of movement organizations" (Oliver 1983:137). This precise definition guiding my study has proven itself to hold in the circumstance of Train of Hope, as its founders devoted a tremendous volume of personal time and work invested into building external relations not only with the Austrian Federal Railways ÖBB to insure a smooth transition for the refugees into other European cities, but also looking for the right partnerships and sponsors for developing the infrastructure of the newly formed organization.

In digital ethnography, contact with the informants and studied groups is often mediated, however my approach involves, besides virtual interactions, being in a direct conversation with members of the community during their volunteering hours at the Wiener Hauptbahnhof. Consequently, in my quest to comprehend how digital media become part of social movements and people's everyday worlds, I am exploring specifically those domains of activity where media helps create new social bonds, highlighting the quality and affordances of social media platforms that enable further aspects of these kinds of relationships (new forms of being together, co-working and co-acting). To be able to recognize, extract and build a theoretical framework for this kind of relations that take shape in the online sphere, digital ethnography implies re-focusing our attention on alternative forms of communicating. By showcasing situations where people and communities might otherwise be invisible, the advantages of writing a digital ethnography renders accessible a set of study cases that represent an added-value to understanding the world we live in (Pink 2016).

Gathering inspiration from anthropologists such as Miller and Slatter (2000), I engage with visual materials (videos, personal photographs and screenshots). Using the visual as a research method helps foster an unprecedented potential for digital dissemination as it expands the limitations of conventional visual anthropological approach (Pink 2012). In this thesis, I have chosen to include images that not only serve as illustrations but also to provide "modes of evoking the feelings, relationships, mentalities, activities and configurations of these things that formed part of the research context" (Pink 2016:13).

1.7 Limitations and Challenges

First and foremost, one challenge was the process of finding informants and interview partners, as during the fieldwork, most of its part was restricted to the physical realm, i.e. Hauptbahnhof Wien. I managed to approach volunteers during field observations, at first just through informal conversations.

In addition, I formally contacted Train of Hope (at this point not yet officially an association) twice via e-mail (21. and 28.10.2015) to inform them about my project, stating the basic subject of the research. At the same time, I kept continuing the aforementioned informal approach of engaging with the volunteers via casual conversations. An approach that Train of Hope later also suggested in their reply to my inquiry, since they are, in their words, 'unbureaucratic'.

Most of my informants were part of Train of Hope since the beginning of September 2015, however, a major draw-back for this research is that I was unable to conduct interviews with the initiators of the movement. During the time of my research, the

community Train of Hope became an official association with an elected temporary board. Due to the restructuring of the organization, a second election was planned at the end of December 2015, nominating different board members. Soon after, it came to my attention that the election has been postponed until February, then March and ultimately never held. Additionally, all but two members of the temporary board had stepped down due to conflicts in the group.

Another kind of limitation is something that every anthropologist is confronted with: ethics and issues within the field. From the start of my investigation on 11th of October, I faced my first and biggest limit: time. The aid-project Train of Hope, which started at end of August 2015 was exclusively a civil intervention. This was the reason why I was not sure how long this field-research might last.

However, the informers were open and cooperative and always happy to have a chat with me, both as a fellow Train of Hope volunteer and as a field-researcher. It did not matter if I worked together with volunteers or if I asked them specifically for an official interview. Each and every one of the "Hoffnungs-HelferInnen" wanted to share their experiences.

For sure, there were ethical (moral, political) issues as well (see Harper 2014: 91). During the participant observation, I acknowledged that the gathered information needed to be treated in a careful manner, in the sense that Train of Hope was reliant on their good image. Therefore, it was a concern of data security (Dewalt 1998: 273). On the other hand, I had the struggle with feelings of guilt on whether it is ethical to interview the volunteers for my own thesis, instead of lending a helping hand in

moments when the amount of work was reaching its highest peak. Thus, I overall felt a particular kind of gratitude and responsibility for the helpers of Train of Hope.

Or as Dewalt better characterizes this moral struggle:

"Ethnographers actively try to developed close relationships and to identify with the group they are studying. Anthropologists need to be aware of the implications of relationships and obligations that they incur in the field" (1998: 274). This is exactly how I would describe the situation within the field research. It seems there are two sides of the same coin.

Another challenge I faced was the language. Even if I concentrated my questions and methods on the volunteers, I found myself in situations where I was caught in the middle. This was reasoned by the fact that some helpers where refugees as well, causing some extra stress within the team and leaded to situations where different groups were insecure about how to act. Also, I encountered volunteers that did not speak English at all, but only German. This meant additional effort from my side, as most of the questions I had prepared were in English, and through the process of spontaneous translation I was scared that I might not extract the exact information and details I previously planned to.

However, all these challenges and limitations acted in the end as a motivator and pushing force that put my ethnographic research skills to the test and ultimately expanded my comfort zone and learning objectives.

Chapter 2 – Hashtags: Building Blocks for Train of Hope

As thousands of migrants crossed the Austrian borders and started gathering in search for help and information at the central train station in Vienna in the fall of 2015, news and commentaries on their stories and struggles started to circulate widely through social media networks.

Through a theorization of the hashtag usage, I discuss how and why social media have become powerful platforms for documenting activism and challenging a civil society response to a 21st century crisis. I show how engaging in "hashtag activism" can create a social movement, and, additionally, I examine how online spaces formed by social media channels can provide strategic outlets for contesting and reimagining social bonds in newly formed communities. This chapter combines approaches from digital anthropology and social movement research to investigate the semiotics of digital communities and to interrogate both the possibilities and the risks of engaging in a "hashtag ethnography."

2.1 The power of Hashtags Online

Before adopting a new meaning within the social media sphere, the symbol # was a simple pound sign or hash. The modern use of the sign was introduced on Twitter; the birthplace where the # sign was turned into an online sensation.

Nowadays, it is integrated in the way we communicate online and it is present throughout the internet, connecting topics on a variety of platforms: from personal blogs to Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube or Facebook, one simply cannot escape the all-encompassing presence of the # (hashtag).

Any word or set of words can become a hashtag if preceded by the hash symbol (#). Basically, it renders the content of one's post accessible to all people with similar interests, without them being friends, followers or fans. Furthermore, anyone can create a hashtag and start using it by inserting it anywhere in their posts: front, middle or end. Some people like to blend their hashtags into the middle of posts, while others prefer inserting at the end. As long as the hashtags have a context, remain clear, unique and relevant, their positioning does not really matter.

Hashtags are compelling and influential when used wisely. If a hashtag contains multiple words, the only possibility is to group them all together as spaces between words are not allowed. To make it more easily-readable and differentiate between words, the use capitals is highly recommended (example: #DigitalAnthropologyInUganda). Uppercase letters will not alter the search results. Moreover, while numbers are supported, punctuation marks are not. So commas, periods, question marks, apostrophes or exclamation points are not accepted and neither are asterisks, ampersands or any other special characters.

At the same time, nothing can be more distracting and inefficient than a cluttered post with an excessive series of hashtags or overly lengthy ones, as for instance #thisLongHashtagIsSoLongAndPointless. An accepted rule of thumb is to keep the number of hashtags to a maximum of two or three per post when posting on Twitter or Facebook.

Hashtags can be both posted about or searched into. For example, if one wants to find out more about a certain product, such as the iPhone 7, a simple search for *#iPhone7*

on any social network will open a dedicated newsfeed with the aggregated posts from all users who used *#iPhone7* in their posts, mentioning latest updates, hacks, deals and rumors. However, most of the times, people do not actively search for hashtags, but rather simply spot them as they appear as clickable links within articles or posts. By clicking on them, a real-time live feed of every post tagged with the same hashtag will appear.

According to The Independent, the most talked-about hashtags in Europe in 2015 were the ones referring to the refugee crisis and the terrorist attacks in France.

"This year's most talked about subject on Twitter was the Paris attacks, the social media site has revealed. Tweeters used the hashtag #JeSuisParis to show their solidarity with Parisians after last month's terror attacks as well as the attacks in January at the headquarters of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo." (The Independent)

The key to creating a viral hashtag is to ensure that it is memorable and there is no one else using the same hashtag (Mashable). For campaign-specific hashtags, users should be given compelling incentives to use them or to make those hashtags relate directly to a trending news. For instance, refugees from the Middle East fleeing to Europe saw #RefugeesWelcome being widely used, and consequently followed this particular hashtag to find information on current state of the EU borders, shelters, routes, meeting points and others.

There has always been something disruptive and magnetic about keywords in general. They may deconstruct the illusion that culture is static, portrayed into a small set of words, those that are key. Or they may attract with the appeal of fixity and

crystallization, reassuring fast-track windows into a culture, a mindset, or a state of being: "...the allure of keywords creates a tension within the work that we do as social scientists, both in our unearthing of lifeworlds and in our professional maneuvering" (Vidali 2014:13).

2.2 Microblogging

Hashtags and keywords are important in the sphere of microblogging, the type of communication that combines blogging and instant messaging granting users to post and share short messages with an audience online. Social platforms such as Twitter and Facebook base their success on allowing popular forms of this new type of blogging, particularly directly from a mobile device such as the smartphone. It renders a much more convenient and rapid way to communicate with people as to the times when desktop web-browsing and interaction was standard.

"These short messages can come in the form of a variety of content formats including text, images, video, audio and hyperlinks. The trend evolved around the later end the Web 2.0 era after social media and traditional blogging merged to create a way that was easier and faster to communicate with people online and keep them informed about relevant, shareable information at the same time." (lifewire.com)

Less time spent developing content: It takes time to write or put together content for a lengthy blog post. With microblogging, on the other hand, one can post something new that takes as little as a few seconds to write or develop.

On one hand, microblogging enables fast reactions, as it takes considerably less amount of time than writing a lengthy blog post, which also reduces the chances of having it read by the audience thoroughly and in its totality. As it is mostly consumed on mobile devices within applications or on web browsers, it encapsulates short messages that go straight to the point. Besides allowing for an accessible way of sharing urgent or time-sensitive information, with more frequent and shorter posts, one may as well use microblogging platforms to encourage and facilitate interaction with audiences through commenting, tweeting, reacting, liking and more.

But how do organizations and online communities use microblogging applications? My aim is to develop an answer to this question and understand the distinguished functions for which organizational microblogging is employed, via examination of the Facebook utilization practices of the Train of Hope.

Previous researchers in the field have theorized that NGOs have not been very successful at engaging with their audiences online by strategizing their online communication and engagement tools (Kent, Taylor & White 2003; Saxton, Guo & Brown 2007).

The most pertinent reason is based on the fact that they did not possess the know-how, nor the staff trained in creating interactive sites, that foster discussion boards and feedback options (Lovejoy and Saxton 2012). The occurrence of social-networking sites has taken away this type of excuses, by providing free, built-in interactivity. Consequently, whichever developing or fully-functioning organization has now the

infrastructure to build its network of followers and activists with whom they can maintain real-time contact.

Globally-spread new media has undoubtedly increased non-profits' ability to communicate with stakeholders such as clients, volunteers, the media, regulators and the general public (e.g., Waters 2007).

Community pages on Facebook can tactically target their posted content, reaching new people, through the use of hashtags, to ultimately mobilize them, build meaningful relationships and cultivate accountability and public trust (Saxton & Guo 2011). "Online nonprofit/stakeholder interactions have effectively become more and more ubiquitous, multifaceted, and critical to organizational performance" (Lovejoy and Saxton 2012:338). The authors also propose two broad organizational functions for new media: information and dialogue. Their study on the stakeholder engagement of NGOs within new media further suggests that the website has become both the "public face" of the organization and the tool that enables intense and meaningful public interactions (*idem.*).

Nevertheless, what the initial generation of studies exposed, was that regardless of the potential Web 1.0 technologies sparked to stimulate a more active and *dialogic* civil society, nonprofits have been unable to use the website as an interactive and strategic vehicle to control organizational communication and stakeholder engagement (e.g., Kent et al. 2003; Saxton et al. 2007).

Over the last decade, studies have debated on the opportunities and final efficacy of social media when it comes to delivering tangible results in community forming. For

instance, Java et al. (2007) bring evidence of a clear linkage between individual users' profiles on Twitter and Facebook, and community development. However, their outcomes do not necessarily validate the positive social effects of social media, so much as the ability of these platforms to simply "serve as a vehicle for narcissism, opinion-making, and information-sharing" (*idem*.:60).

Divergently, other researchers (Hughes and Palen 2009; Smith 2010) showcase direct figures that prove the ways in which Facebook and Twitter realistically serve as a valuable communication and information-sharing resource, throughout global emergency-relief efforts.

In time, the amount of research at the level of non-profit organization on social media has not grown as swiftly. The results gathered so far, from studies on nonprofit utilization of social media, state that the heavy dependence on basic informational practices represents a lost opportunity for fostering dialogue and interactivity with supporters (Bortree and Seltzer 2009; Lovejoy and Saxton 2012; Waters et al. 2009).

2.3 Social Media Platforms

Van Dijck gives a review on the emergence of social media platforms from the very first decade of the 21st century until 2012, adding a historical context, as well as a critical note in the background of a rapidly changing ecosystem of connective media. In my research, this type of history is vital to better grasp how these media have come to deeply affect our experience of online sociality.

Although the author analyses five major platforms such as Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Wikipedia and Facebook, I am only interested to further research the latter. Facebook as a microsystem occupies a unique position in the larger ecology of connective media. By concentrating on the premises that enabled the creation of this platform, Van Dijck's study underlines ways in which norms for online interaction have gradually transformed. Sharing specific hashtags, friending, liking or following a certain community are now expressions of online practices saturated with distinct technological and economic meanings.

By taking a step back to review the development of social media platforms and the building blocks that stood at their base, it is often believed that Facebook is an evolved version of the old 'cell phone lists' which Horst and Miller (2005) have introspected during their fieldwork in Jamaica. They argue that mobile phones have essentially shaped the way Jamaicans create local forms of networking through the use of non-'face-to-face' communication. Also, on the same topic of the cell phone experiences, Archambault (2012) touches upon the subject of technology-mediated communication, which facilitates cross-boundaries, invaluable interactions and debates. The phone acts, in his case, as a material culture which can unite or destroy groups or family bonds, "changing one's experience of the world", depending on the ways it is handled from user to user (*idem.*:402).

2.4 The creation of a Cybersociety

One's online presence or membership to an online community should not be taken for granted, nor to be viewed as the standard of the digital age. But, to access the Internet or mobile phone communication in its most basic form, one must have access to resources in order to pay for this kind of services. On the indicated topic, Maurer et al. (2013) seek to describe the forms in which agency of financial resources and geolocation impact the new communicative infrastructures, as well as how the anthropologists ought to look at the materialistic implications which result from this.

The authors show the way in which lack of online reach (especially on social media) can jeopardize someone's level of trustworthiness, through their observations of mediating agents, who were supposed to deliver a variety of products and could not accomplish their mission, due to their temporary and involuntary disconnection from an internet source.

Nowadays, trustworthiness is unquestionably a vital asset also in online communication. For instance, if a group (such as the core team of Train of Hope) decides to have an online Skype or Google Hangout session, in order to discuss important aspects for their community, if presence is not honored by some members (due to different reasons such as lack of access to high speed Internet), it could lead to creation of new tensions or even loss of membership. A similar situation on how a virtual space can change ideas about society, integrity and identity is explained by Boellstorff (2008) out of his experience in a virtual world, called Second life. His studies have inspired my research and my approach towards digital anthropology,

where we must highlight that the emerging forms of cybersociality must be taken seriously, as they can create vital community values which can have repercussions in the physical life.

Marc Prensky, a digital impact expert, introduced the terms *digital natives* and *digital immigrants* to showcase differences between generations of internet users. This discrepancy arrives from the fact that today's youth have spent their lives surrounded by a large scale offer of new technologies: video games, personal computers, digital music players, video cameras, laptops, cell phones, and all the other toys and devices of the digital age. "It is now clear that as a result of this ubiquitous environment and the sheer volume of their interaction with it, today's students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors" (Prensky 2001:1). He goes one step further, claiming that new technologies not only have the potential to change thinking patterns, but as well, have already rewired the brains of millennials, the "native speakers" of the digital language (*idem.*).

This comes in contrast to the ways in which all other generations are adapting to new technologies. The latter are digital immigrants, those having to learn to adapt to their environment, and who inevitably always retain their "accent," that is, their foot in the past. The "digital immigrant accent" can be spotted in small details, like turning to the Internet to find information second rather than first source, or in initially reading the manual for a program, rather than learning in the process of utilizing a certain product. "Today's older folk were "socialized" differently from their kids, and are now in the process of learning a new language. And a language learned later in life, scientists tell us, goes into a different part of the brain. There are hundreds of examples of the digital

immigrant accent" (*idem.*). This accent makes the difference when it comes to sending or understanding messages and trends in the digital sphere, as well as the readiness of having a reaction to eventual calls of actions. On the other hand, digital natives are used to receiving information extremely fast, as they engage often into parallel processes and multitasking, enabling them to create faster social bonds, respond and be flexible in a large variety of situations that involve online communication.

2.5 The Infrastructure of the Internet

What makes social media the ideal platform for mobilizing a social movement for a humanitarian cause?

As mentioned before, small, marginal interests were regarded as particularly likely to be advantaged by the open architecture of the Internet (Hindman 2008). However, even though the architecture of the Internet does explain the diverse possibilities of the medium, the overall understanding of Internet's infrastructure, that strongly affected most discussions of the medium, is incomplete. The numerous components that blend up to build the architecture of the Web function as a whole, help make sense of the idea that "infrastructure refers to the subordinate parts of a more complex system or organization" (*idem*.:13).

The same way as the word infrastructure first found its purpose in military contexts, its meaning in this context relates to the idea of interconnectedness. In former times, to increase the efficiency of fighting force, "one needs not just infantry and tanks but also a network of supporting buildings, installations, and improvements, such as bases, supply depots, railroad bridges, training camps, and so on. Collectively, these

supporting facilities came to be known as infrastructure" (Hindman 2008:14). This definition emphasizes the importance and wisdom that infrastructure carries along, allowing for groups and communities to be knitted together, in order to allow themselves to more efficiently work together.

Hindman (2008) suggests that infrastructure can be debated upon in two distinguished senses. On one hand, in its most basic sense, the infrastructure of the Internet stands as the infrastructure of communications technologies, comprising: hardware (computers, wiring), network protocols (assigning nodes on the network to interact), the coding that runs the personal computers or even the training that facilitates users to read and create online texts (*idem*.). Oxford English Dictionary specifies infrastructure as "a collective term for the subordinate parts of an undertaking; substructure, foundation". Equivalently, Merriam-Webster notes that infrastructure is supposed to be an "underlying foundation or basic framework (as of a system or organization)".

However, my current focus is to isolate some key parts of the infrastructure that inhibit or allow citizens to make choices, filter the content of their online searches and ultimately reach to output that personally resonated to them. So how difficult can it be to find the right answer and resources in a virtual space, where one can easily get confused and overwhelmed with options? It makes sense to just have a look at the millions of websites that citizens can choose to visit. Even more, according to Google, the largest online search engine world-wide, it now processes an average of over 3.5 billion searches per day and 1.2 trillion searches per year worldwide (Figure 1).

The chart below, helps visualize the number of searches per year throughout Google's history, and at the same time, allows for reflection on how personalized information preferences are, and whether or not one should doubt that citizens will consciously choose to not see some categories of content and some sources of information (Sunstein 2001; Negroponte 1995).
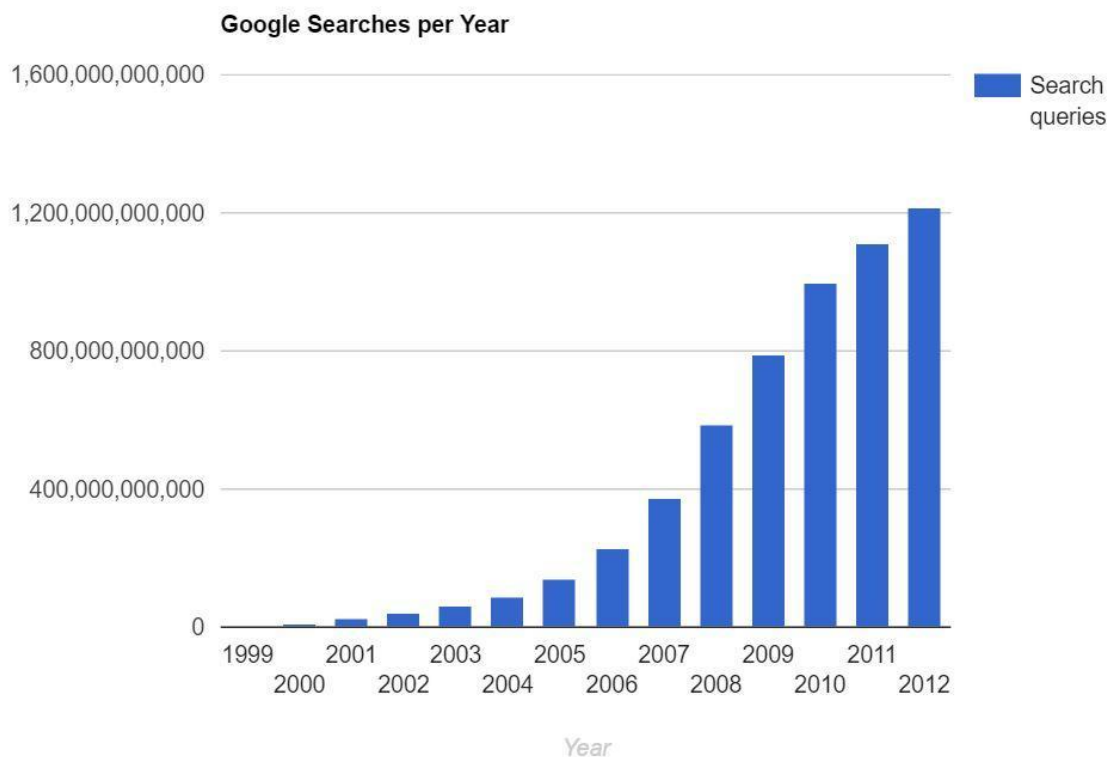

Figure 1 – Number of Google searches for the period 1999 to 2012
(source: internetlivestats.com)

Still, the most vital action that a user ought to take is filtering. Hindman (2008) indicated that this is not at all a conscious process, as it represents a "product of the

larger ecology of online information" (2008:15). The link structure of the Web is crucial in governing what content citizens encounter.

Internet browsing generally begins with searching for one or more keywords, and continues with the choice between tens or thousands of different links, providing a way for users to travel from one site to another. Due to the Internet's infrastructure, not all choices are equal. Some sites typically rise to the top of search results, while other sites do not even get indexed by search engines. The visibility of social causes in the virtual world trails a "winners-take-all pattern", with extensive implications for the humanitarian calling voice. "If we abstract away these underlying parts of how citizens interact with the Internet, it is easy to overlook the real patterns in who gets heard online" (*ibidem.*).

It is mandatory to enlarge our understanding of technological architecture of the Internet as Lawrence Lessig (1999) suggests. Through a clear discern of this technology's social implications, one must take a broader view of what the Internet's infrastructure contains. In his most influential and widely cited book, Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace, Lessig touches upon the structure and nature of regulation of the Internet. He argues that the latter makes itself present basically through elementary design choices that shaped the Internet, as well as the software code that recurrently regulates what users are able or not to do, more than through laws and norms.

"The network protocols that route data packets around the Internet and the HTML code used to create Web pages say nothing about search engines, and yet these tools now guide (and powerfully limit) most users' online search behavior" (Hindman 2008:16). So, looking at the architecture of the Internet in a larger context, one cannot

but notice that browsing the Web both restricts and frees access to various websites, that in conclusion ought to trigger the question on how much room is there actually for citizen voices in the online sphere.

Therefore, the richer the amount of paths there are towards a site, the more traffic it will receive. So, what determines the rank of a link in the search engine results is not always represented by the most accessed websites. For instance, when searching for volunteering opportunities in Vienna during the autumn season in 2015, one of the main results on Google, besides the advertised options for The Red Cross, Caritas and other well-known organizations, one could also find the newly emerged movement of Train of Hope, as one of the most talked-about topics and rapidly developing projects. Furthermore, the hashtags used by the community to raise awareness for their campaign proved itself to hold the power of channeling a certain type of discussion, around carefully selected key-words. Even if citizens face few formal hurdles to posting their views online, from a certain angle, we tend not to care much about who posts, but rather about who gets to see it.

"There are plenty of formal and informal barriers that hinder ordinary citizens' ability to reach an audience" (Hindman 2008:18). Most online content receives no links, attracts no eyeballs, and has minimal political relevance. Again and again, this study finds powerful hierarchies shaping a medium that continues to be celebrated for its openness.

This hierarchy is structural, woven into the hyperlinks that make up the Web; it is economic, in the dominance of companies like Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft; and it is social, in the small group of white, highly educated, male professionals who are

vastly overrepresented in online opinions. Google and Yahoo! now claim to index tens of billions of online documents; hierarchy is a natural and perhaps inevitable way to organize the vastness of online content. But these hierarchies are not neutral with respect to democratic values.

"The use of virtual worlds as research environments presents challenges that render traditional research methodologies inadequate for rigorous academic investigation. These challenges seem to fall into two categories: those resulting from the inaccessibility of virtual world activity; and those resulting from a lack of academic understanding of the relationship between virtual worlds and the so-called 'real world'. Researchers encounter accessibility issues to virtual world activity in two ways. The first is the notorious lack of accessibility to data held by the companies that run the virtual worlds. The second is a product of the researcher's technical and cultural unfamiliarity with the chosen virtual environment" (Arnason 2011:100).

Understanding the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which hierarchies of online life impact politics, will be an important task in the twenty-first century. The Internet has served to level some existing political inequalities, but it has also created new ones.

2.6 Who controls Social Media?

The challenge of accessibility has often been pinpointed to be the main problem for research in virtual communities. Virtual world activity takes place, as indicated by Bell (2008:2), on networked computers. It is recorded and collected on equipment that belongs to the company (Facebook in the current case), that owns, controls and runs a given virtual environment with all its private data.
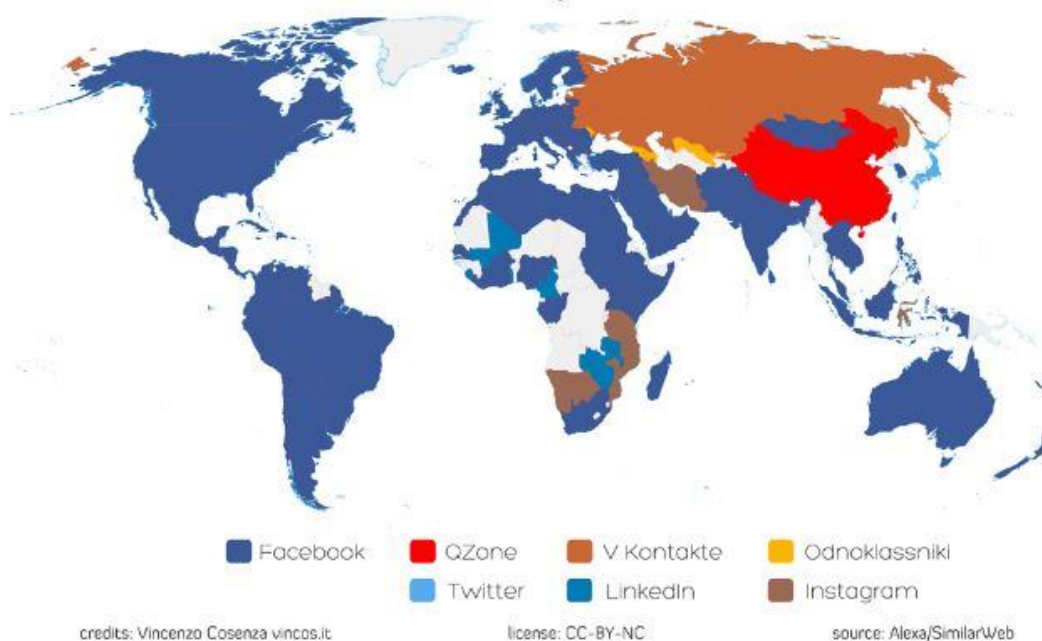
WORLD MAP OF SOCIAL NETWORKS
January 2017

- Facebook
- QZone
- V Kontakte
- Odnoklassniki
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Instagram

Figure 2 – Social media platforms dominating the global market in 2017

It is showcased in Fig. 2, the spread of the top social media networks at an international level. The most outstanding social media network is the US-based Facebook, with more than 1.8 billion monthly active users, according to the World Economic Forum. The same source states that as of 2016, Facebook is also the top social network in Europe, with 307 million users and in a significant part of Asia, with 540 million users. The takeaway of these figures is that Facebook is not just a U.S. phenomenon, but a network that renders a worldwide market available via its services.

"With social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter extending their reach across Asia and Europe, they serve as opportune platforms for connectivity, as they create large webs of people to people links, facilitate cultural exchanges, change the way

news is distributed and even change how government bodies reach out to civil society"
(ASEF Outlook Report 2016/2017).

2.7 Functions of Train of Hope's Microblogging Activities

Train of Hope's place of birth was the online sphere. It all started on Facebook, with the 8 "founders" of Train of Hope. They did not know each other before, but what brought them together were the hashtags they had been following, the news and their willingness to "go out there" and help. After many hours spent commenting on diverse posts, contacting each other through private messages and talking with family and friends, they decided to meet at Hauptbahnhof Wien and see how they could help local authorities or NGOs on spot to deal with the refugees. It did not take them too long to realize that no one was there to handle the desperate situation of hundreds of men, women and children seeking for shelter, travel arrangements and information, in a country where they do not speak the language.

That was when they decided that only a proper organization and commitment could lead to tangible results in helping those in need. And what better place is there to look for volunteers and donation, if not the online platform that brought them together in the first place.

On September 3rd 2015, the Facebook page of what was to become *Train of Hope - Hauptbahnhof Wien #hbfvie* was set up. The first profile photo represented the first design logo, created and offered free of charge by the Austrian artist Niu Livio Finn, himself a volunteer with Train of Hope (Fig. 3).

Figure 3 - First profile photo by Train of Hope on their official Facebook page

The same designer also provided the first cover photo, depicting two hands, one helping the other (Fig. 4).

Figure 4 - First post cover photo on Train of Hope's official Facebook page

On the same day when the Facebook page was launched, the first post represented a screenshot of a Google Maps satellite image over the Hauptbahnhof area, where the exact location of Train of Hope was highlighted over the exterior of platform 12. The following posts, all in German language, depicted moments from the train station, stories of refugees and volunteers, requests for donations and other daily updates. As the both the physical and virtual communities grew, posts on the official Facebook page became by-lingual, German and English, in order to accommodate and encourage volunteers from all over the world to donate, and also, to get a better picture of the situation at the main Viennese train station.

Train of Hope succeeded to create and flourish its community on social media and therefore, it is essential to understand how the use of Facebook (the messages, posts and responses) contributed to develop the organization to its current state. In the following subchapter, I will look at a variety of techniques that Train of Hope adopted through Facebook posts in order to reach, persuade and enrich its audience.

2.8 How Train of Hope Interacts Online

Train of Hope's presence on Facebook did not occur randomly and its current existence and interaction with its volunteers, followers and stakeholders in general is mainly due to the type of group dynamics that the organization fosters on this platform.

From the launch of the official page on Facebook, Train of Hope's social media team posted over 316 times until March 2017. These are not mere numbers, but they are representative for hundreds of messages, that shaped throughout time their audience and built upon their values and mission as an organization.

Six distinctive types of Facebook posts emerged from the digital participant-observation technique, as revealed and further conferred in detail below.

On the basis of inductive analysis of the data from the 316 public posts by *Train of Hope - Hauptbahnhof Wien #hbfvie*, I have assembled these categories under three main functions: Community, Information, and Action.

First and foremost, the Train of Hope would not exist if it would not be for its *community*. This function highlights the organization's main resource and its unique values meant to open dialogue, foster relationships, and offer immediate relief support to the people in need. By creating a community that is linked to an international network, Train of Hope helped raise attention to the issue and ultimately gathered even more support and donations.

Through this particular function, the organization keeps a continuous dialogue with its active members, as well as with those who would be interested in joining the community. Posts that reflect the "family" sentiment within the team, references to keywords such as "bonding" and "togetherness", plenty of "thank you" and acknowledgement posts, all help deliver the community's message, scope and values to the larger audience.

The second function, *informing*, lays at the heart of the organization's choice for establishing a presence on Facebook. This role encompasses the duty for spreading information about the organization, its members and their activities, as well as presenting a realistic image from the first-line of interaction with refugees and their situation.

Lastly, *action* is the function that motivates and encourages the active members, as well as the online followers to "do something" for the community, whether it is to join the movement and volunteer, buy a merchandizing item, make a direct donation, attend an event or simply raise their voices and contact those in leadership positions to trigger a political change. Hereby, mobilization and promotion stand as the basis of this function.

a. Addressing the *community* function

Studying current discussions on how non-profits make use of their social media channels, it has been observed that a certain gap emerges between what is communicated, what is received as feedback and how often a constructive dialog is created in the process.

Granting Facebook's main purpose is microblogging, it is also a social networking tool that enables further actions: sharing, conversing and sequentially, creating an online community with its followers. At the same time, communicating and maintaining a dialogue on this platform can be hindered by its own functions. Up to 90% of the feedback that Train of Hope received per each post is measured in the number of "Likes". Therefore, a "Like" certainly acts as a confirmation that the public has read and agreed with what the organization has communicated, but in the end, it is the "comments" that make up for the dialogue, allowing for a diversity of responses.

Recently, in its quest to foster more dialogue and offer the chance to express a larger palette of emotions, Facebook began allowing its users not only to offer a "Like" to a post, but also "react". Using one of the six emoji (Fig. 5) available at the moment, users can indicate their emotional reaction to a certain post.
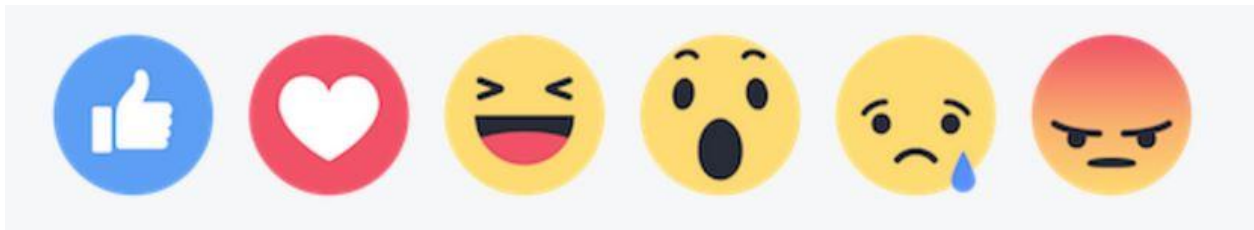

Figure 5 – Options of reacting to a Facebook post

Reactions is an extension of the Like button to give people more ways to express themselves and share their reaction to a post. The collection of Reactions includes Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad and Angry.

(Facebook's Guidelines)

This kind of visual, quick and simplistic feedback, allows organizations and individuals to acknowledge the typology of feeling that a post triggered, yet without any further explanation of those reactions, or a two-way conversation, that may stimulate improvement.

In this case, I can count three aspects to this particular function: basic reactions, dialogue and community-building. First and foremost, as I mentioned before, the most frequent type of interaction between Train of Hope and with its online community is through posts and the affiliated reactions. Even though it does not generate a large amount of input from the followers, this is still a feedback opportunity and a way to maintain a close relationship with stakeholders.

There are also posts that nurture more complex reactions, which usually develop into dozens of commentaries and affiliated replies between organizations and their publics; this is similar to the notion of "dialogue" from organizational website literature (see Kent et al. 2003).

Finally, there are those posts whose key determination is to deliver a message that strengthens ties with the community, without the expectation of an interactive conversation. Nah (2009) advocates for this component as it directly relates to the social capital and network-building functions, and can be conceivable in organizational websites.

I have mapped a series of posts from Train of Hope that fulfill the community function. What binds the categories below is the common scope of building and engaging with a supportive online community, constituted by the organization and its supporters.

Therefore, through offering gratitude, recognition and acknowledgment of related local events, the organization showcases the "community-building" aspect, whereas "responding to public reply messages" is rather associated with the "dialogue" element. Giving recognition and thanks (Fig. 6) is one of the basic tenets of nonprofit management. Acknowledging and thanking donors, supporters, volunteers and online followers is essential (Fig. 7). Overall, 17% of the times Train of Hope posted on Facebook, it served this particular function.
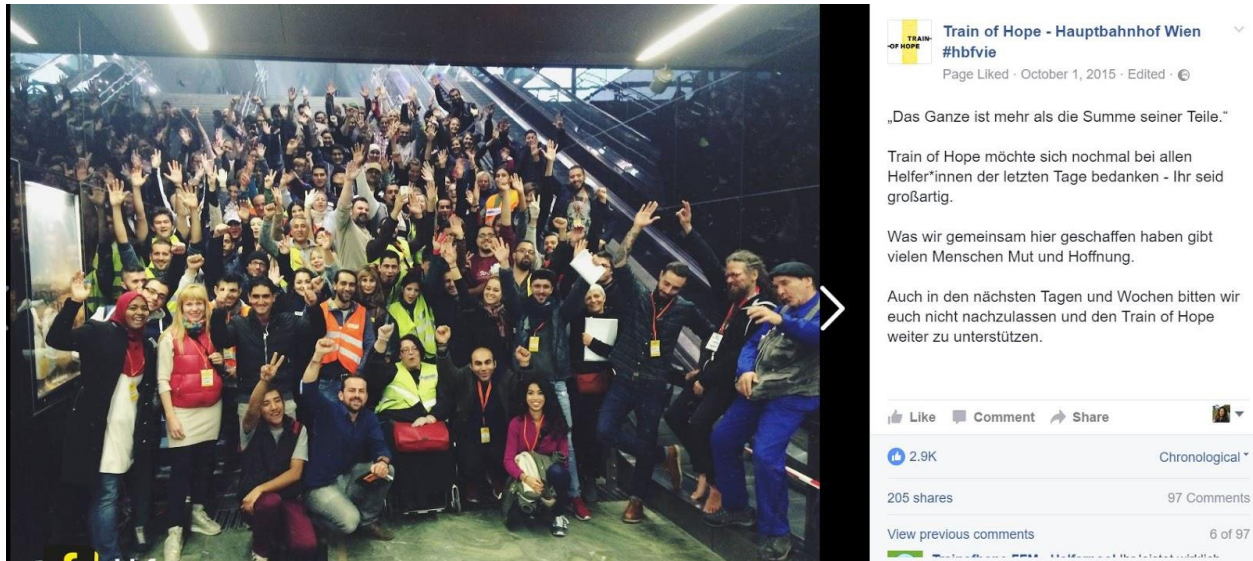
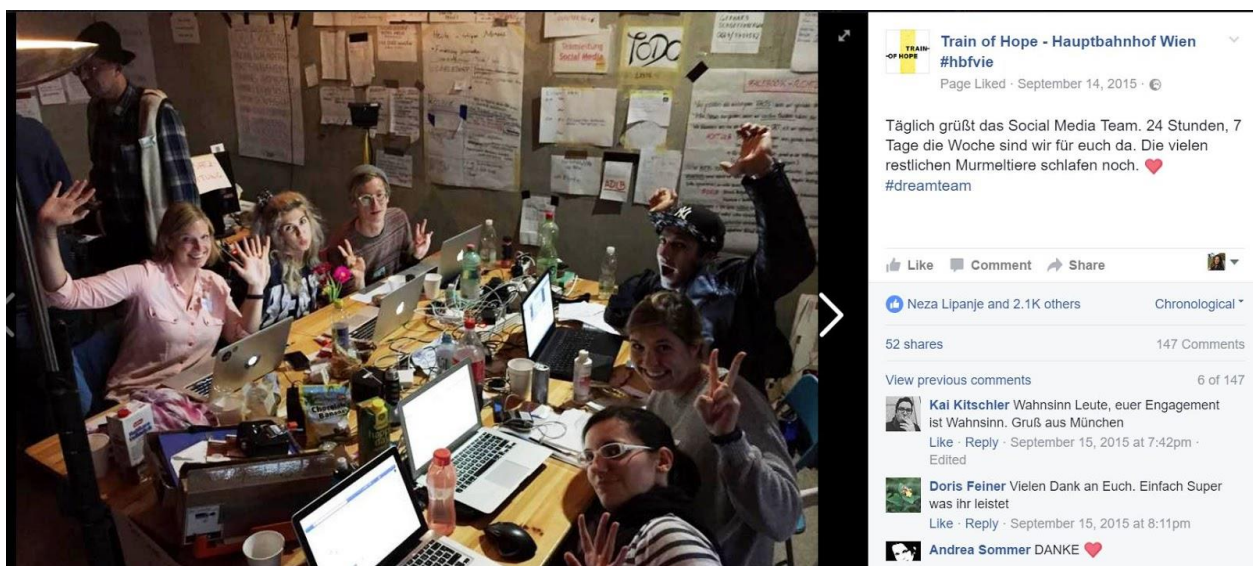*Figure 6 - Giving thanks to the helpers and followers*

Figure 7 - Recognizing the Social Media team's efforts

a. Informing

The information function comprises posts that cover information about the organization's activities and events, as well as European migration-related news, official reports (Fig. 8) or any kind of information that may be of interest for Train of

Hope's stakeholders. It basically involves one-way interaction, the organization playing the role of the informant toward its public. As it can be observed in the following example, many of these posts provided links to other sites where additional information could be retrieved (Fig. 9).

Figure 8 - Infographic on the refugee spending in Austria

Figure 9 - A small guide to online shopping for donations

b.   Calling for *action*

The third function, *action*, bears at its core the messages that intend to get followers to "do something" for the organization. The individual deeds can be anything from calls to engage in advocacy campaigns, attend meeting or events or simply support the cause by donating money, goods and objects needed for helping the infrastructure or the refugees.

It encompasses the power of messages on social media that cannot only promote, but also mobilize Facebook users. The latter are perceived as the essential resource that can be assembled and rendered ready to help the organization accomplish its mission.

Out of all three functions, the *action* one is feasibly the most concrete, because it is outcome-oriented: it invites followers to do something tangible and real, in order to support the organization in meeting its objectives. After all, this represents what most of the humanitarian-aid-oriented organizations ultimately wish to achieve: to set followers in motion, to make donations or join in as activists. "They want to move their followers, in effect, from informed individuals to members of a community to activists and donors. It is less about creating dialogue than it is about mobilizing resources and supporters to fulfill financial and strategic goals" (Lovejoy and Saxton 2012:345).

The most common messages within the posts published by Train of Hope, are included in the function of *action*, and overall consist of more than 60% of all messages sent (Fig. 10).
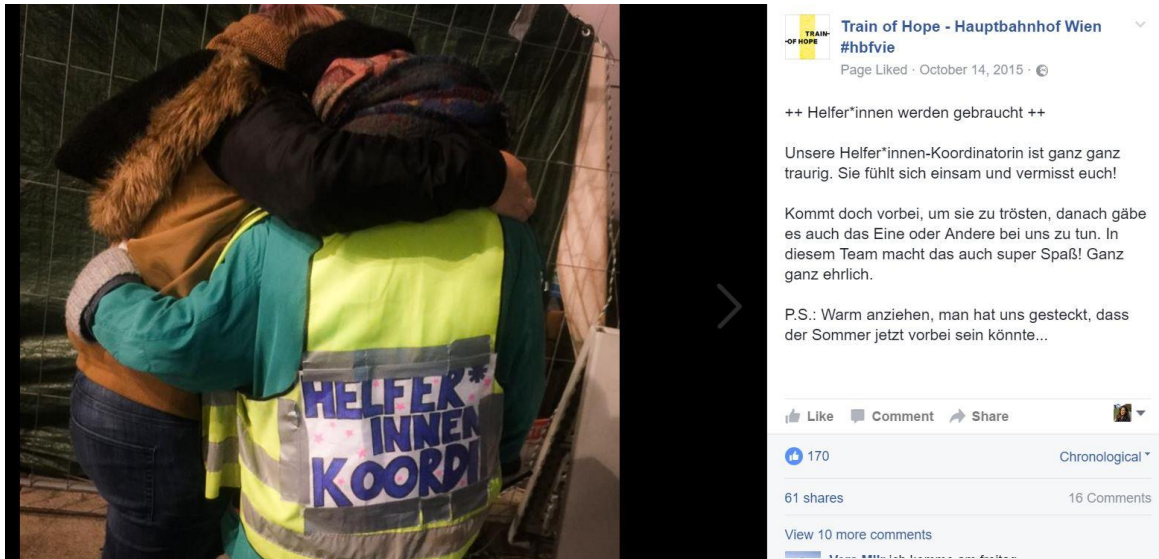
Figure 10 - Making an emotional appeal for volunteers

By far, the most advertised action message is the donation appeal (Fig. 11). The way to receiving the right kind of help (goods, money, sponsorships) is to ask for one, in a manner that reflects that certain need. This is why, each post from this category is accompanied by a photo which reinforces the message.
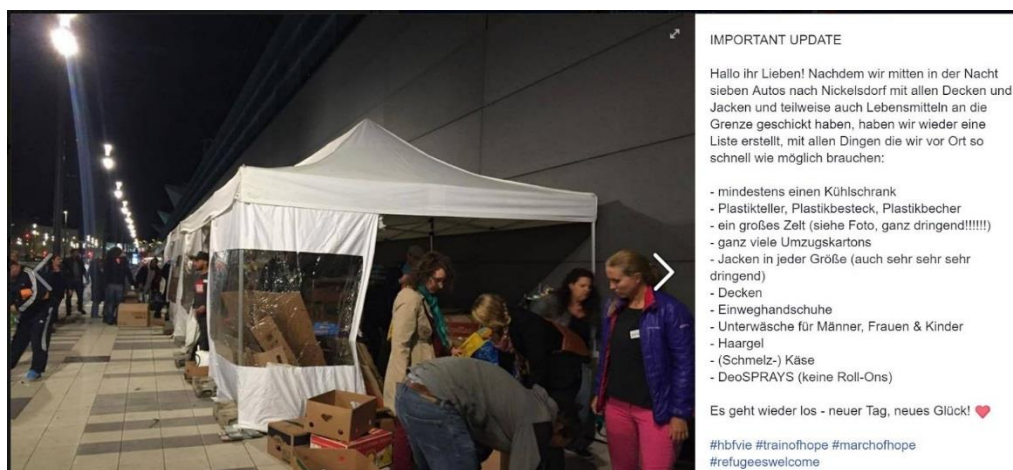
Figure 11 - Listing the particular products needed as donations

Train of Hope uses Facebook to extensively issue calls for volunteers, concluding in a staggering 35% of the total posts on this particular online platform (Fig. 12).

Figure 12 - Call for volunteers: helpers and interpreters

All in all, Train of Hope has proven a heavy reliance on services offered by social media, and Facebook in particular, in order to promote the organization and mobilize supporters. By making use of specific messages, the organization is able to inform, connect with the community and let the followers know the ways in which they can contribute to Train of Hope's mission.

Through these messages, Train of Hope managed to spread the word, gather millions of impressions on their posts and build both an online and physical community, organically. In social media terms, this means that the organization did not invest money in advertisements, nor either kinds of paid promotion, but simply grew its engagement by encouraging its followers from its early beginning to "like and share" their postings.

In this chapter, I revealed processes through which social media's usage, especially in the context of a non-profit organization such as Train of Hope, influences the creation of both an online and a physical community.

Dialogue is a vital ingredient for community-building, and in the case of Train of Hope, an overwhelming majority of its interactions use it to reach out to the audiences. However, dialogue as a process is difficult to track, and its impact cannot be qualitatively measured when doing research on a social media platform, without having access to directly observing each stakeholder behind their devices. Therefore, these findings serve the proposition that dialogue may not be the key form of social media-based organizational communication.

On a more practical note, being on Facebook may in itself indicate that an organization is willing to actively engage with the public. At the same time, this kind of indicator may be more effective if reflected explicitly within the published posts. Train of Hope is not a usual case of an organization using social media, where Facebook would simply fit into the overall communication plan.

There is no "right way" of using Facebook and similar social media platforms, however it is vital to understanding the connection between organization's needs and its choice in using certain tools to meet those needs. Besides the larger picture, one has to be fully aware of what purpose each message or post serves, as far as the public being targeted is concerned. The three categories I presented offer assistance in this task, bearing in mind that they serve as a blueprint for better grasping the core functions of microblogging messages.

Chapter 3 - The social impact of Train of Hope

3.1 What makes Train of Hope distinctive: hierarchy and family

Laurent Thevenot amounts his arguments to the same idea of creating a distinctive environment, yet one that can be easily relatable to, and that offers the feeling of security and familiarity within a social grouping. He coins the terms "regimes of engagement" and "grammars of commonality in the plural" to capture ways of being in the world, where one can develop intimate attachment to a group of people that share one or more familiar qualities. "Familiarity provides ease of action, comfort and a form of security" but at the same time this particularity exposes a series of threats, towards which the rest of the world could appeal as insensitive (2015:8).

For instance, while keeping in mind that there are various circumstances in which individuals and their environments have a constant and unavoidable effect on each other, "parts of the world become familiar to us as a result of our actions, and the familiar consequently determines the way we interact with it and other agents" (*ibidem.*). As the regimes of engagement show that one can identify various degrees of familiarity in a completely new sphere of interaction and socialization, the grammars of commonality correspond to "ways of being with each other in the world" (*ibidem.*).

The latter, show that engagement in familiarity is unavoidable as human beings. This common trait of all of us is argued by Thevenot to stand out, both as an advantage helping us create strong social bonds that empower a sense of togetherness, and at the

same time, showing its limits and weaknesses that could lead to forms of abuse and exclusion.

When one shares plans and projects with others, they must be aware that they are exposed to the consequences of promoting their own values, whether they are shared or not shared. This means that, as the author implies, there are processes that allow bonds to arise, even in the absence of shared values; an idea that will later provide a much clearer understanding of the background processes that enabled the birth of the organization Train of Hope.

In this case, a liberal grammar may be argued to be representative for the Train of Hope as a community, because it is developed "among individuals who were relatively alien to one another, opening the possibility of welcoming highly differentiated populations and immigrant newcomers" (*idem.:*91). Within Train of Hope, new members, whether they are themselves refugees or locals, are treated on an equal footing, as both parties understand the benefits of learning from each other, in order to facilitate and accomplish the goal of the organization. The community is the common ground where both kinds of grammars converge towards a common purpose: helping the refugees in their quest to starting a new life in a European country.

Nonetheless, Thevenot explains that grammars exist both outside and inside the structure of a community. Extrapolating on the claims made by core members of Train of Hope, by adopting a liberal grammar they manage to dissolve hierarchies and promote a horizontal equality between the volunteers, by exposing their choices and favor them according to their merit. Train of Hope decided to adopt a strategy that many NGOs work with, when their teams are formed by individuals with different

ages and multicultural backgrounds. The author calls this new device the "roundtable" that renders possible a governance based on a liberal grammar "in which communicating rests on similar formats of individual interest, stakeholder or interest group" (Thevenot 2015:93). Therefore, the organization ought to summon the voices of its members equally, look for common ground and act accordingly, by eliminating the chances of power abuse that usually tend to appear in a hierarchical structure.

In theory, as long as negotiation in on the table along with ethics, a common goal and direct democracy, the community formed after a social movement has all its chances to thrive in its initiative. "There is no visible hierarchy among persons who communicate through a common-place, and the grammar can be presented as horizontal […] which also builds on engaging in familiarity" (*idem.*:96). A key word in the latter quote is the word *visible*. By rendering visible a certain feature of a group, had seldom anything to do with reality, but rather with the image that the community opts to expose.

During my interviews with the Train of Hope members I have noticed divergent narratives on the idea of decision-making power among the members. There have been more than 4.000 volunteers at the station, all of different age, gender, origin and class. Many helpers came from foreign countries, speaking different languages.

The volunteers I met during participant observations and hours of volunteer work, were very dedicated and often described that they felt as part of history in the making.

Among them were pupils, students, people who took a break from work, unemployed, retired, homeless, tourists and refugees that all offered their time for one reason: to

help. I could see the various skills that were contributed with, and the way new volunteers quickly learnt from the others. These skills were carefully taken into consideration when delegating tasks. While some volunteers accepted to do solely one task that they became very good at, some others preferred a position of leadership, where they could manage the distribution, check upon the quality and the quantity of the work and ultimately set themselves apart with their job titles as *coordinators*.

... [Within Train of Hope] the hierarchy is very flat, I mean, the general rule is that we all have the same rights but of course it doesn't work that way, because if you're here every single day and somebody else is here once a week and you get to know more and you do more, that should mean that eventually you have more rights but it's just the way the work gets done in the end, you know?

(excerpt from interview with *Ira*, one of the social media managers)

Either a team leader or a new comer working on sorting donated clothes, they all had one thing in common: a strong motivation to keep coming, besides the wish to help. They all brought the same argument which is *the community* that has been established between the different helpers, often described as *family*.

...because it's just volunteers working we have the benefit of being able to work very flexibly, so there are no rules, no obstacles, no...you know, what you kind of have to overcome when you work in a normal company. Like lot of bureaucracy and everything! We don't have that, we can react to everything very, very quickly and can adapt to everything that changes within a second or maybe a minute. But that kind of

style of work I will definitely remember because it's very rewarding 'cause you know

you're immediately helping people…

(excerpt from interview with *Ira*, one of the social media managers).

3.2 Social bonds

As defined by Dumouchel and Gotoh (2015), social bonds represent distinguished kinds of relationships between agents that share common moral attachments and boundaries that lead to a certain delimitation of the group. Nowadays, these social bonds have the tendency to be dismantled and re-organized much faster, especially in response to catastrophes or critical situations that require fast decision-making and assume notions of freedom, independence and open-mindedness.

Hereby, young people denominate the most susceptible group to respond to new challenges that might, or actually directly influence their daily routine. Examples can cover actions such as building opportunities to work together towards a common purpose and provoke changes, while questioning the status-quo of the political regime.

It is often perceived that most political actions have a slow development and rarely manage to address issues in a timely manner, due to bureaucracy and complex hierarchies within. In response to this, social bonds form a new platform where members come to witness, reflect and act in a variety of proactive ways.

As the world changes, one needs to tackle assumptions and dispute ethics and political discourses, that much too often embody presupposition about societies that are perpetually being taken for granted without further reconsiderations and adjustments.

In time, these may gain the status of logical truths. However, practical situations and the advantages that our generation possesses today, all amount to the idea that universal rules of justice have not always represented the most ethical resolution in conflicts. Also, the previously constructed "logical truths" turn out to be false, bringing about the realization that even basic postulates might be in need of revision (*idem.*).

This dichotomy between the universal and the particular has always been at the heart of socio-historical conditions of change. Still, the separation makes sense only if viewed from a bird's eye perspective in a larger entity where "bonds that hold together members of the group also constitute a boundary that separates that group from other groups" (Dumouchel & Gotoh 2015:2).

Politics of difference as well as various social movements can be examined both as "symptoms and agents of the transformation" of empirical conditions, that lead to the emergence of theoretical trends defining multiculturalism, feminism and so on.

Authors agree it is important to underline that by empowering the politics of recognition, newly formed groups and social movements are able to demand cultural and individual rights that ought to be rendered compatible with ideals of equality, universality and neutrality. Despite this liberal view, these has also been a frequently heard criticism concerning the fact that multiculturalism must be dealt with prudently, as it drains the welfare state of resources (Hewitt 2005). In other words, encouraging social movements and cultural diversity could weaken national solidarity, leading to additional instability and financial insecurity within the larger majority (*idem.*).

Examples such as *Environmental Defense*, *Occupy* street movements, *Save the Arctic*, *Train of Hope* and many others, highlight that citizen motivation aligned with social media can deliver results that would have been unattainable in the pre-Internet era. These examples have been identified by media and political science experts to constitute evidence pointing at the Internet to be "disintermediating" political activity, allowing for a larger organizational flexibility, while thoroughly diminishing the role of political elites (Hindman 2008).

Even though most scholars consent that Internet is allowing new forms of political and social organizing, some express disagreement about the importance of these changes. Others express disagreement that citizen disinterest in politics will sabotage much of the Internet's potential political impact. "The effect of the Internet may be not to increase political activity but instead to repackage it. That is, instead of citizens undertaking political action that they ordinarily would not, people who would have participated anyway might simply be taking their activity online" (Schlozman et al. 2012:488).

Park and Perry (2008) found that Internet use had little effect on civic engagement. They define this as an incentive tool for participatory democracy and general government reform. An empowered citizen is well-informed and consequently, capable to encourage good governance by rendering all levels of government transparent and accountable for its actions. In modern networked societies, civic engagement continuously evolves, changing forms and styles and particularly, through Internet use and online engagement, is it likelier than ever for regular citizens to be provided with a platform that would revitalize democracy in the digital era (*idem*.).

Internet positively influences action-oriented civic engagement (*idem.*). Brian Krueger (2002) supports for the idea that Internet holds the power to mobilize many previously inactive citizens. Furthermore, a series of scholars backup the theory on the basis of which, at least for younger citizens, Internet use is associated with increased social capital (Shah et al. 2001, Johnson & Kaye 2003). Besides this factor, Internet use itself is largely altered by political interest, knowledge, income, college education, and media exposure, yet negatively influenced by age, gender.

For instance, according to Park and Perry's research, users who attended a college are differentially more likely to approach and express concern about politics than those who did not. "Young generations of females tend to talk about politics with family and friends more often than their counterparts", while males tend to start more online conversations and defend their point of view on virtual platforms (*idem.*:252). However, confidence in government, political efficacy, and race do not affect this engagement substantially.

On the other hand, Pippa Norris, an expert in comparative politics of social activism considers that Internet "probably has had the least impact on changing the motivational basis for political activism" (2001:22). Moreover, Markus Prior (2007) detected conflicting effects revolving around one's political engagement, precisely that Internet use fosters political knowledge among citizens who were formerly concerned with politics, yet it had the opposite outcome among the ones already apathetic. The same argument is brought forward by Bruce Bimber who assumes that despite some organizational innovations, "it does not appear, at least so far, that new technology leads to higher aggregate levels of political participation" (Via Hindman 2008:10).

3.3 Humanitarianism: the basics for the emergence of Train of Hope

Western Humanitarianism and the ways in which distant suffering has been construed, still undermine and recreate hierarchical distinctions between people in the world. The idea of charitable work appeals to a common human emotion of unconditional benevolence for those in need. Thus, humanitarian campaigns such as the ones for recent refugee crisis are argued by Kurasawa to be directed towards making the audience empathize with the suffering of others in such a form that does not stimulate "recognition of their moral equality" (2015:12). For instance, Train of Hope makes use of its social media channels to visually expose the suffering of refugees that arrive at the Hauptbahnhof Wien, resorting to pictures and videos that show helpless, vulnerable families or individuals who are in desperate need of help (Fig. 13).

Figure 13 – Screenshot of Train of Hope's post on 30 October 2015

Kurasawa claims that analysis of using these kinds of representations is essential to grapple with the claim that "the cultivation of good conscience and of a feeling of moral superiority is fundamental to the donor's willingness to give" (*ibidem*.).

By portraying the victims of crises in this manner, expressly when they are victims of human-constructed, conflict-based situations, and by not acknowledging the ones suffering as equals whose rights were violated, we carry on with viewing them as the "suffering others" who trigger emotions of moral superiority, pity and charity from the audience.

It is suggested that these "good sentiments" must rather be replaced by critical reflections on the predicaments of the ones suffering along with considerations of the roles that we (as Westerners) might have played in favoring their current situation.

Kurasawa calls in his conclusions for another type of humanitarianism, one that does rest on recognition of universal equality while it reinforces prejudices and divisions that have nothing to do with equality, but rather one that mobilizes actions, "outrage and revolt at the perpetuation of structural injustices and the reproduction of massive socio-economic inequalities" (*ibidem.*).

A parallel effect of the humanitarian imperative is its increased commercialization as business opportunities, where taxes are low and the interests high. Even though a large number of humanitarian actions are undertaken by privately managed institutions and NGOs, the governments play a vital role as it is in their legal obligation to meet responsibilities and organize the distribution of aid whenever needed.

According to Smillie & Larry (2004:225) the humanitarian world can be dismantled into three main sets of people and organizations:

1. The people in need: refugees, victims of war, famine, cataclysm et al.;

2. Front-line organizations that are directly involved with the people in need: UN agencies, local and international NGOs, Red Cross, military and privately self-organized movements;

3. Those who "pay the bills": governments, individual donors.

Political economy of humanitarianism is developed to a large extent on the basic scheme of need and demand, where governments, in the same manner as the individuals, grant preferential assistance. "There are no obligations beyond the moral, no consequences (for the givers) of doing less than enough, or of doing nothing" (*ibidem.*).

The right to humanitarian assistance is seldom defined in national law and obscurely enunciated in international law, itself a highly contested domain (Smillie & Larry 2004:7). Facing obstructions in policy-making, bureaucracy, and an intertwine of processes that lead to a slow response in delivering immediate relief to urgent situations, the responsibility to offer a timely-efficient response to crisis, such as one of the largest waves of asylum seekers in Europe, was taken over by citizens. Train of Hope is an ideal example of a situation where national governments and international institutions could not cope in real-time with the unfolding events and where the power of will combined with moral citizen responsibility and 21st century instant mass-communication technologies managed to offer a viable solution to crisis.

Visual culture resumes to the axiom "seeing is believing", as a visual type of documenting any social aspect is more likely to gain instant reliability, trust and support. Especially in regards to communication on human rights, such as the right to asylum, activists choose to approach the matter through the use of still or moving images that behave as transparent mirrors of reality and undeniable proof.

But the validity of those moving images corresponds directly to the critical contextualization, demanding a careful interpretation. When it comes to transnational stories, new variables emerge in telling those stories to international audiences: they mostly possess a poor awareness of the local context. However, by bringing a local context closer to a foreign public requires a translation, it reshapes the message so that it touches in a personal way someone living in a totally different reality.

According to McLagan (2006:191), it becomes exponentially more difficult to resist the "globalization of local images stripped of their meaning by keeping intact local voices in local contexts". The less fortunate side of this action is overexposure of events that lead to what journalist Susan Moeller calls "compassion fatigue" (1999). In this sense, the public will not respond to major events such as calamities, wars, revolutions that do not take place in their vicinity, the same way as they used to.

Now, with the overflow of information, it is naïve to assume that exposure and revelation, from the use of visual elements circulated through online media, will trigger the expected reactions at a global scale. Hereby, Sam Gregory (2006) showcases the importance of reaching targeted audiences with personalized messages that reach individuals (be it partners, activists, decision makers, neighbors) and names

this process "smart narrowing". It is the opposite of the "dumb" broadcasting where messages are delivered to masses.

Human rights activism that leads to social movements relies at a large scale on testimonies, as powerful discourses where witnesses are asked to testify and make claims for redress and recognition on the basis of one's ethics and humanity. McLagan (2003) depicts them as "intercultural technology" in the framework of activism, for the reason that testimonies manage to cluster people across boundaries of difference, put them in contact with each other, in ways that obligations and freedoms are discussed and communities of solidarity are formed.

There is an ongoing controversy between what visual media can offer and actually reaching the intended results and actions through the usage or creation of new platforms for response. Social movement theorists often bring into discussion the concept of "framing", when they seek for further investigation into what makes certain ideas persuasive in a social movement (Snow and Benford 1988).

Frames are interpretive kits surrounding a core idea, which help motivate collective action, produce shared beliefs and ultimately generate and bundle appropriate strategies of action. In this direction, social movement activists "frame, or assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists (*idem.*:198).

Frames allow for significant changes in individual consciousness on various issues, and they are often compared to the manner in which religious conversion is done: they

ought to resonate with cultural narratives and traditions to be appealing (Snow 2004). The activity of framing spawns specific products called "collective action frames" which possess highly influential effects on the ways in which situations are understood, and on the tactics their supporters use (Khagram et al. 2002:13).

The keyword here is *understanding*. On the basis of the fact that meaning is produced at the interaction between social action and systems of signs, words and visuals may be interpreted distinctively by activists and their target audiences. "Given the multivocality of messages, it is possible for actors and targets to interpret these signs differently than intended. There are limits to the capacity of the producers of these discourses to control their meanings (Merry 2006:42).

It all comes back to translation. Back to the reinterpretation of local ideas and grievances, to a national language and consequently into international human rights. This process is familiar to anthropologists generally translate the cultural worlds of the communities they study into cultural worlds of their audience, the readers (see Clifford and Marcus 1986).

When engaging with research topics such as activism, social movements and human rights, anthropologists have always encountered roadblocks and tensions. "Questions of cultural relativism, individual and collective rights, the ethics of research […] the politics of knowledge production, and the critiques of "rights" and the rights activism as a form of struggle have all challenged and shaped anthropology's encounters with human rights" (Speed 2006:70).

Anthropologist Shannon Speed proposed the terminology "critically engaged activist research" to highlight the fundamental element in ethnographic research: the critical cultural analysis. In doing so, anthropologists do only not contribute with their findings to a theoretical form of understanding of various social dynamics, but can also help build upon or re-draft concrete political objectives on the ground (*idem.*). In this case, the multiple contradictions and tensions that exist can be employed in a productive manner by analyzing them rather than avoiding them.

Communities at risk are aware now of their condition and can recognize the potential for exploitation by researchers, and the consequences that research products can carry in undermining, rather than relief their struggle. Speed backs this proposition with examples from her own research on human rights within indigenous communities: "…by approaching them as an activist researcher, I was able to make explicit my solidarity, and we could establish what the extent and the limits of that solidarity would be" (*idem.*).

3.4 Volunteering at Train of Hope

Sociologist Pamela Oliver has studied similarly constructed collective movements which served non-profit communities and drew conclusions which I will further investigate through the lens of my study case. Oliver proposed that commitment must be a keyword that ought to be kept in mind throughout the debate on activism, and consequently engage with a kind of investigation that brings to the surface the underlying motivations that trigger that commitment. In her analysis, most movement organizations have at the beginning volunteers who dedicate their efforts on the basis

of their own beliefs. Further on, as organizations become more renowned, they gain a certain presence and therefore start dealing with large amounts of financial donations. As members are pushed into handling new monetary resources, this process develops a certain hierarchical structure, as in the case of Train of Hope.

The point she makes that touches upon and matches my own observations is that even though the cohort effect has a major impact in keeping the volunteers motivated on the short run, the "most committed will become paid activists if resources are available" (Oliver 1983:134).

In the situation of Train of Hope, even though at the inception and throughout the duration of my fieldwork none of the activist were being paid, I could observe the tensions arising from rumors circulating inside the team tackling the possibility for coordinators and core team individuals to receive a certain allowance for their continuous investment in the organization's development, as resources were rendered available.

Whereas the number of refugees increased day by day, Train of Hope began to develop into a successful movement that was able to attract not only volunteers, but as well large amounts of material and financial aid. Therefore, the involvement of certain members had been challenged by the modality in which the leadership structure took shape. Originally these leadership roles have been filled up randomly, often by self-promoting or by being recommended as a volunteer who tends to have excellent social skills, an authoritative presence and a daily engagement. When asking Zaid, the

transport coordinator, on whether he got his leadership position through a transparent, democratic voting process among the Train of Hope members, he stated:

"Well, no, it wasn't voting. It was basically luck. The ones who were initially supposed to be coordinators for the transport team, they weren't able to be present the whole time. Seeing how I was free and how I pretty much knew everybody here I started taking initiative and handling different tasks by myself without asking permission…anyway my team leader was never there. Therefore, shortly then I took over this coordination position" (excerpt from interview with Zaid).

However, this particular way of advancing on the hierarchical ladder of the organization was shared by a series of other volunteers, who got promoted the same way, basically due to their own sociable personality as well as their proven approachability through a daily presence at the Train of Hope's premises. Still, not long after my interview with Zaid, as the word started circulating internally that volunteers in leadership roles might start receiving a payment for their progressive commitment, other long-term volunteers began questioning whether the coordinators truly deserved to be in that distinguished privileged spot, and also if meritocracy had unfolded in an ethical way.

Moreover, Pamela Oliver argues that by assuming that "people are motivated only by their own material gain" (1983:139) one will obviously make an erroneous judgement. However, a series of theorists, who looked at modalities in which collective action alter the concepts of benefit and cost, have also taken into consideration other kind of motivations for volunteering in humanitarian situations. For instance, James Q. Wilson proposes three basic sorts of incentives:

1. Material - tangible material/financial rewards;

2. Solidary - intangible rewards resulting from social interaction;

3. Purposive - also intangible compensation arising from "the sense of satisfaction of having contributed to the statement of a worthwhile cause" (Wilson 1973:30-34).

Within Train of Hope I was able to identify both the purposive and solidary incentives that acted as the main drive of the volunteers, however I could also sense a tendency towards the idea of material, tangible rewarding as a part of the official leadership of the organization. The latter incentive had definitely been causing a number of tumultuous discussions inside the closed Facebook group, where members intensively argued over the rationality behind having as leaders certain volunteers who were not working as many hours as others, and moreover, started mitigating for the creation of a set of guiding rules (which did not previously exist, as they were not needed).

4. Conclusions

Online platforms: Set-up for Social Impact Communities

Internet has not long ago broken apart the monopoly previously owned by television networks, where information does not emerge from just one place, but rather thousands of places that can be personally researched upon, while connecting to fellow audience and debate in real time. Consequently, many scholars have not shied away from admitting that "the Internet is the most democratizing innovation we've ever seen, more so even than the printing press" (Trippi Via Hindman 2008).

In 2002, Michael Powell, the chair of US Federal Communications Commission who employed Internet to advocate for looser regulations on broadcast media, made clear that "information technology… has a democratizing effect… With a low cost computer and an Internet connection everyone has a chance to 'get the skinny,' the 'real deal,' to see the wizard behind the curtain".

Journalists as well support the idea that Internet and social media in particular offer a degree of empowerment to the people never seen before, challenging traditional media through its existence as a medium that "will give new voice to people who've felt voiceless" (Gillmor 2004 via Hindman 2008).

Still, by rendering one's voice heard, does this imply that it will be taken in consideration by relevant authorities, or will it make a noticeable difference in the vast sea of non-distinguishable speeches? While some argue that Internet is redistributing political influence by broadening the public sphere, increasing social participation,

involving citizens in a range variety of activities, and challenging the monopoly of traditional elites, others bring forward advantages that the use of internet favors only a certain group and their interests. In the example of how Train of Hope managed to turn the Internet into a tool to amplify the political voice of ordinary citizens, I argued that by expanding the public sphere and allowing the variation of ideas and concerns to be discussed on social media, it becomes more likely for regular citizens to participate in the creation of a movement that they want to support.

4.1 The future of Train of Hope: Spin-off initiatives

Train of Hope's activities at Hauptbahnhof Wien were officially ended on 16 December 2016. (Fig. 14). My final day of fieldwork revealed a desolate atmosphere and an almost unrecognizable venue of what, just a few days before, was Train of Hope. Even though the last post on the official Facebook page was announcing the need for help, in order to clean up and pack what is left at the venue, the place looked barren with no people, nor any kind of activity around. The main entrance to the Train of Hope's office ("official volunteers only") was surrounded by aluminum fences.

Later that day, I managed to discuss with two young people, the only Train of Hope members on site, in charge with packing the remaining donations. They informed me about the apparent reasons why the community stopped its activities, mainly related to the lack of refugees during the winter season. Though, there was no word about the internal discrepancies.

So, what were the volunteers going to do? Would they go on to work for similar organizations? If not, is it because Train of Hope was not a usual organization but

rather a special community, a family? What would become of Train of Hope? In order to find answers to these questions I turned back to the online sphere, the only place where Train of Hope was and still is present, continuing to communicate with its followers, donors, members, supporters and other stakeholders.

Figure 14 – Packing up at Train of Hope Hauptbahnhof Wien (December 2015)

Train of Hope was definitely more than an organization created by a hashtag. It became a social movement that triggered a series of reactions. The first of them was establishing the temporary infrastructure at Hauptbahnhof Wien in order to help refugees arriving to Vienna. At the same time, it created a variety of initiatives that were inspired by people who volunteered and the core values of the community.

Stories published by Train of Hope on their Facebook page, as well as stories heard at their location in Hauptbahnhof, inspired a series of artistic initiatives. From theatre plays, such as "Traiskirchen. Das Musical" (Traiskirchen. The musical) and "Theater am Markt – I think we call it family", to placing pianos in the Viennese city center (project *Open Piano for Refugees*), or publishing story books.

For instance, "Come quickly, Achmet" (original: Komm schnell, Achmet) - is the title of an E-Book published in June written by pupils (3rd to 6th grade). The book was the result of a writing competition on social commitment, emphasizing emotionally touching stories on a common theme: migration. The short stories are about fictitious individual fates, however they highlight the insides of people who had to leave their country due to violence and war. The texts follow to report this dangerous journey made by the refugees in the hope that in Europe they will be able to lead a life of peace and security. Moreover, all revenue made through selling the e-books benefited the Train of Hope.

A further example is *New here*, a mobile application that acts as a personalized map for refugees, and that was developed by a civil society initiative called *#welcomeoida*. Part of the team members from this initiative volunteered with Train of Hope and therefore, had the chance to be at the front row of interaction with refugee. This simple fact had a remarkable impact for the growth of their new initiative and the launch of the application. Another *tech* outcome, launched after the end of Train of Hope by former members in July 2016, is the organization called *Refugees code*, where refugees are given the chance to attend courses and workshops, and learn software skills from experts in the domain.

These projects and campaigns have not only been a direct result of the Train of Hope's influence on its volunteers and followers, but they also contribute on the long term to keeping alive the memory of the organization: from the way it took shape, to the social movement it triggered and ultimately its role in determining societal reactions.

4.2 Transition to a memory place…

As I have previously stated, whether voluntarily or not, Facebook provides a platform that acts indirectly as a memory place, a locus that can take on a life of its own, quite apart from the way it may be experienced or remembered.

Various researchers have defined memory not as an object, but an achievement, which is produced through the interactions of humans and the practices that regulate the interactions (cf. Schwarz 2013:8). This process of generating memories through action is also a concept that manifested throughout my observations. Hereby, the sense of working together and the emphasis on seeing each member as "part of one family", is a common theme that was often mentioned in interviews or witnessed during participant observation - also concerning the memories people had of the place and of the volunteering experience in itself.

Secondary research, brought up to the surface the discovery per which, collective memory is usually *there*, when there is a common sociocultural context, mostly used as a tool for a community to collect and recount the past (Wertsch 2008:140).

"Sociocultural" is an outstandingly broad term – however, throughout my findings, I could clearly remark that within the Train of Hope community, it did not matter from

what country one originated, nor the social status he or she belonged to. What mattered was that they were at the Viennese Hauptbahnhof and therefore they had the same sociocultural context - the physical place - as their common space for working, interacting and ultimately developing strong group bonds and memories.

However, besides the element of "being there", to contribute towards creating a memory place, the role of media portraying a locus is deeply complex. What I found out about media's investment in forming memory is that there is a shift into memory practices. "In these fields [media studies] she notes a shift from interest in objects of memory to memory practices, and a concomitant emphasis on the constructed and political nature of cultural memory" (Van House/Churchill 2008: 296). This is particularly interesting because, although Train of Hope is not a political organization, the way people interacted with each other could be described in the same way as for instance, members of a political party would communicate with each other. They had the same goals, the same principles and worked together on one exact task. And media (as in the Internet) is a form that put them together and created that community.

But if we look at the process of generating collective memory, and the construction of a memory place, there was not much to be found, because in general, there is not a lot of literature about memory places and especially about memory places that have a digital component. But one can state that:

"[…] we must still consider how we go about developing an analysis of social memory in a digital context that both adequately accounts for the persistence of traditional media texts and technologies and how these interact with more recent technologies and textual forms. This perspective challenges the view that there has been a wholesale

transformation of remembering by digital media. Instead, turning this into a question forces us to consider not only the relations between change and continuity but also the implications of an unprecedented accumulation of media and cultural resources, and their potential for ways of making sense of our own and others' experience over time" (Keightley/Schlesinger 2014: 746).

The concept of "place" is irrevocably a multifaceted one, where in order to allow a coherent definition to exist, one must detect a set of themes marking critical the features of this term. Firstly, place can be perceived experientially. "While it is true that we cannot reduce place to a "construct" simply imposed upon raw space, without an experiential focus and direction, place would lose what is common to the very concept: its affectivity. Thus, we experience place in an affective way" (Trigg 2012:7). Our elementary source of apprehending a given environment is rendered possible through the movement of our bodies. Therefore, on the basis of a corporeal emphasis, a place emerges to exist as a singular, both temporally and spatially. In other words, we are situated in the world, as long as we occupy a particular place.

Trigg's claim that "we carry places with us" resonates with the way in which volunteers perceive their affiliation with Train of Hope. According to private conversations and official interviews, a series of members admitted that from the point when their story was posted on the Facebook's timeline, they have been referred to as "that Train of Hope volunteer". This way, their physical appearance was directly linked to a place. "Place becomes profoundly constitutive of our sense of self." (*idem.*)

In this respect, the statement "we carry places with us" gains a primordial significance greater than the one indicated by habit alone. By carrying places with us, we open ourselves to a mode of embodiment that has less to do with habit and more to do with the continuity of one's sense of self" (Trigg 2012:11). His statement can be translated in a simple manner: the fact that the body can be not only specific to a particular place, but the relation one has with any given place is unique and irreducible. The sense of *place* does not require the belonging to neither an individual's constructs, nor the world's reality. "Experience, affectivity, and particularity are at the heart of place" (*ibidem.*).

Neisser (1967) also highlights that memory is about the interactive and layered construction based on traces from earlier experiences. Theses footprints are consistently and selectively accessed. So, distortion and deletion of information is imminent. Anthropologists and sociologists have grappled in many ways with the definition of "memory", and throughout time contributed to the elasticity or fragmentation of its meaning, based on the rhetorical uses to which it has been put (Gillis 1994, Wertsch 2002).

Scholars attribute the process of memory creation to a collective, affirming that remembering is essentially social. "It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (Coser 1992:38). At the same time, memory is also essentially individual: "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember" (*idem.*:48).

Therefore, places have the power to render defenseless our memories but also foster imagination as they are not based only on human experience. Such operations are structured by social arrangements: connecting the dots, a group membership provides material for memory and incited persons into recalling and concomitantly, a community can trigger memories in individuals that they at no time sensed directly (*idem.*).

Train of Hope's administrators for the official Facebook page are still very much active, and through their messages posts and actions, they keep updated the image of the organization. They help create a virtual memory place, where not only the new initiatives that were inspired by Train of Hope get visibility, but also by accessing recurrently memories of what the organization once used to be. Campaigns such as #TB (throwback) "Die Helfer*innen vom Hbf" (The helpers from Hbf) tell the individual stories of volunteers, their personal motivations and the type of involvement they used to have at the Train of Hope (Fig. 15).

Recently, the community changed their name of Facebook to "Train of Hope - Flüchtlingshilfe Wien", suggesting that even though they have abandoned Hauptbahnhof Wien as their "headquarters", they continue to pursue the organization's mission and expand its reach.
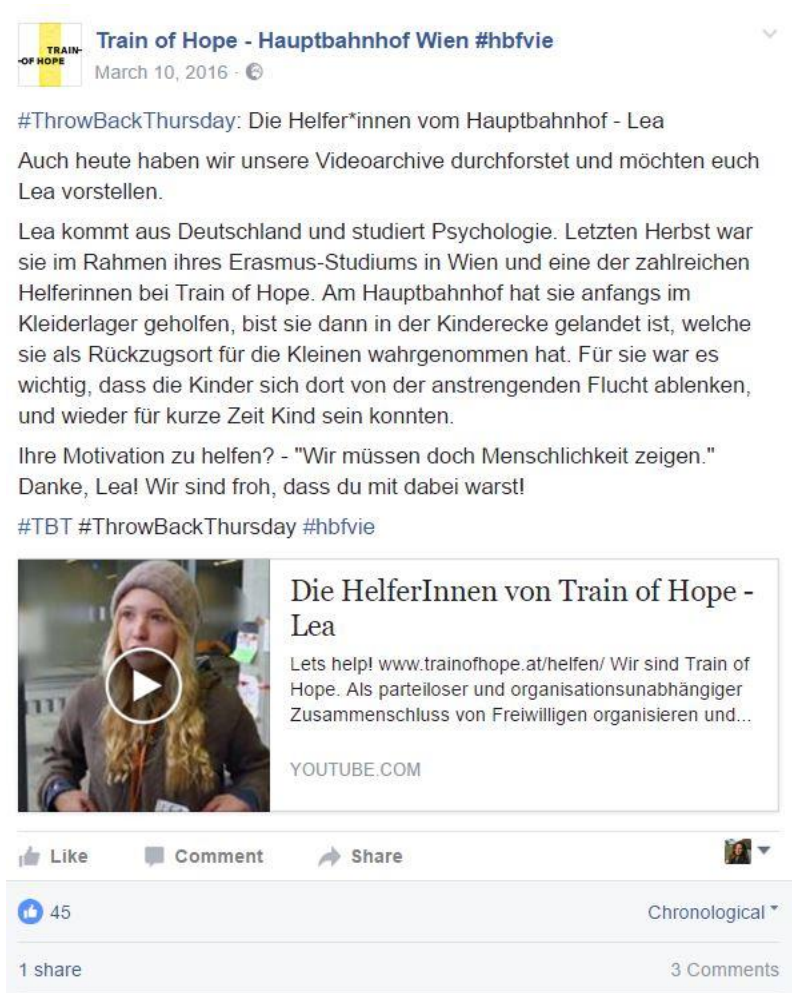
Train of Hope - Hauptbahnhof Wien #hbfvie
March 10, 2016 · 🌐

#ThrowBackThursday: Die Helfer*innen vom Hauptbahnhof - Lea

Auch heute haben wir unsere Videoarchive durchforstet und möchten euch Lea vorstellen.

Lea kommt aus Deutschland und studiert Psychologie. Letzten Herbst war sie im Rahmen ihres Erasmus-Studiums in Wien und eine der zahlreichen Helferinnen bei Train of Hope. Am Hauptbahnhof hat sie anfangs im Kleiderlager geholfen, bist sie dann in der Kinderecke gelandet ist, welche sie als Rückzugsort für die Kleinen wahrgenommen hat. Für sie war es wichtig, dass die Kinder sich dort von der anstrengenden Flucht ablenken, und wieder für kurze Zeit Kind sein konnten.

Ihre Motivation zu helfen? - "Wir müssen doch Menschlichkeit zeigen." Danke, Lea! Wir sind froh, dass du mit dabei warst!

#TBT #ThrowBackThursday #hbfvie

Die HelferInnen von Train of Hope - Lea

Lets help! www.trainofhope.at/helfen/ Wir sind Train of Hope. Als parteiloser und organisationsunabhängiger Zusammenschluss von Freiwilligen organisieren und...

YOUTUBE.COM

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ➤ Share

👍 45   Chronological ▾

1 share   3 Comments

Figure 15 – #ThrowBackThursday - The visual story of a Train of Hope helper

Bibliography

Arnason, Lara
    2011 "New Media, New Research Methods: Current Approaches to Research in the Virtual World." Media International Australia (8/1/07-Current) no. 138: 98-111. Communication & Mass Media Complete, EBSCOhost (accessed July 21, 2016).

Bortree, D., and Seltzer, T.
    2009 Dialogic strategies and outcomes: An analysis of environmental advocacy groups' Facebook profiles. Public Relations Review, 35. Pp. 317–19.

Clifford, James and Marcus, George eds.
    1986 Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dewalt, Kathleen et al.
    1998 Participant Observation. In: Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology, ed. Russel Bernard. Pp. 259-299.

Dumouchel, Paul & Gotoh, Reiko (eds.)
    2015 Social Bonds as Freedom: Revisiting the Dichotomy of the Universal and the Particular. Introduction Pp 1-23.

Fuyuki Kurasawa
    2015 Western Humanitarianism and the Representation of Distant Suffering: A Genealogy of Moral Grammars and Visual Regimes. *In* Dumouchel, Paul & Gotoh, Reiko (eds.) Social Bonds as Freedom: Revisiting the Dichotomy of the Universal and the Particular. Berghahn Books

Gillis,John R.
    1996 Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity. Princeton University Press.

Gunter, Barrie et at.
    2002 "Online versus offline research: implications for evaluating digital media", Aslib Proceedings, Vol. 54 Iss 4. Pp. 229 - 239.

Gur, Alon
    2012 Bowling Online: Examining Social Capital and the Impact of Internet-Generated Interactions. University of Pennsylvania. http://repository.upenn.edu/curej/152.

Heimreich, Stefan
    2007 An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography. American Ethnologist, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 621-641.

Harper, Ian.
    2014 Ethics *In* Doing Anthropological Research, edited by Natalie Konopinski. Pp. 91-102.

Henrikson, J. H.

2011 The Growth of Social Media: An Infographic. Available at: http://www.searchenginejournal.com/ the-growth-of-social-media-an-infographic/32788/ [Accessed 8 March 2016].

Hewitt, R
2005 White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hughes, A.L., and Palen, L.
2009 Twitter adoption and use in mass convergence and emergency events. International Journal of Emergency Management, 6. Pp. 248–260.

Java, A., Finin, T., Song, X., and Tseng, B.
2007 Why we twitter: Understanding microblogging usage and communities. Proceedings of the 9th WebKDD and 1st SNA-KDD 2007 workshop on Web mining and social network analysis. Pp. 56–65.

Kamarck, Elaine C. and Nye, Joseph S.
2004 Governance.com: Democracy in the Information Age. Brookings Institution.

Karen O'Reilly
2005 Ethnographic Methods. Psychology Press.

Kent, M. L., Taylor, M., and White,W. J.
2003 The relationship between Web site design and organizational responsiveness to stakeholders. Public Relations Review, 29. Pp. 63–77.

Kittler, Friedrich
1997 Media Theory after Poststructuralism *In* Essays: Literature, Media, Information Systems.

Khagram, Sanjeev
2002 Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movements, Networks and Norms. Minneapolis: Universiy of Minnesota Press.

Laurent Thevenot
2015 Making Commonality in the Plural on the Basis of Binding Engagements. *In* Dumouchel, Paul & Gotoh, Reiko (eds.) Social Bonds as Freedom: Revisiting the Dichotomy of the Universal and the Particular. Berghahn Books.

Lessig, Lawrence
1999 Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace.

Lovejoy, Kristen and Saxton, Gregory D.
2012 Information, Community, and Action: How Nonprofit Organizations Use Social Media. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 17/2012. Pp. 337–353.

Matthew Hindman
2008 The Myth of Digital Democracy. Princeton University Press.

McLagan, Meg

2003 Human Rights, Testimony and Transnational Publicity. Public Segments: The Scholar and Feminist On-line.

2006 Introduction: Making Human Rights Claims Public *In* American Anthropologist Vol. 108, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 191-195

Merry, Sally E.
2006 Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle *In* American Anthropologist Vol. 108, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 38-51

Miller et al.
2016 Online and offline relationships In How the World Changed Social Media. UCL Press.

Moeller, Susan D.
1999 Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death.

Negroponte, Nicholas
1995 Being Digital. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Neisser, Ulric
1967 Cognitive psychology. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Norris, Pippa
2001 Digital Divide? Civic Engagement, Information Poverty and the Internet Worldwide. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp.303.

Park, Hun Myoung and Perry, James L.
2008 Does Internet Use Really Facilitate Civic Engagement? In Civic Engagement in a Network Society. Eds. Yang, Kaifeng and Bergrud, Erik. Information Age Publishing. Pp. 237-269.

Prensky, Marc
2001 Digital natives, Digital Immigrants. Part 1. On the horizon, 9(5), 1-6.

Prior, Markus
2007 Post-Broadcast Democracy. How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections. Cambridge University Press.

Putnam, Robert
2000 Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster

Saxton, G.D., Guo, C., and Brown, W.
2007 New dimensions of nonprofit responsiveness: The application and promise of Internet-based technologies. Public Performance and Management Review, 31, 144–173.

Schlozman, Kay L.; Verba, Sidney and Brady, Henry E.
2012 Voice and Equality. Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. Harvard University Press.

Schull, Natasha

    2014 Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas.

    2012 The Unheavenly Chorus: Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy. Princeton University Press.

Snow, David and Benford, Robert

    1988 Ideology, Frame Resonance and Participant Mobilization. International Social Movement Research 1:197-217.

Snow, David

    2004 Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields. In The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements. Pp. 380-412. Malden MA: Blackwell.

Smillie, Ian and Minear Larry

    2004 The charity of nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World. Kumarian Press

Smith, B. G.

    2010 Socially distributing public relations: Twitter, Haiti, and interactivity in social media. Public Relations Review, 36. Pp. 329–335.

Speed, Shannon

    2006 At the Crossroads of Human Rights and Anthropology: Toward a Critically Engaged Activist Research *In* American Anthropologist Vol. 108, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 66-76.

Sunstein, Cass R.

    2001 Democracy and the Internet. Princeton University Press. Pp. 224.

Trigg, Dylan

    2012 The Memory of Place: A Phenomenology of the Uncanny. Ohio University Press.

Vidali, Debra Spitulnik

    2014 The ethnography of process: Excavating and re-generating civic engagement and political subjectivity Vol.15(1), pp.12-31.

Waters, R. D., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., and Lucas, J.

    2009 Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook. Public Relations Review, 35. Pp. 102–106.

Wertsch, James V.

    2002 Voices of Collective Remembering. Cambridge University Press.

    2008 Collective memory and narrative templates In Social Research: An International Quarterly 75 (1). Pp.133-156.

Weston, Kath

    2012 Political Ecologies of the Precarious. University of Virginia.

Online

Twitter reveals its most popular hashtags of 2015 *In* The Independent (source: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/twitters-biggest-moments-of-2015-a6763036.html accessed on 24.12.2016)

VincosBLog (2016) World Map of Social Networks. Available at: http://vincos.it/world-map-of-social-networks/ (accessed on 18 February 2016)

The Beginner's Guide to the Hashtag *In* Mashable (source: http://mashable.com/2013/10/08/what-is-hashtag/#ZY8_gwAHSkqr accessed on 26.12.2016)

ASEF Outlook Report 2016/2017
(source: http://asef.org/images/docs/1.%20Digital%20Connectivity.pdf accessed on 20.12.2016)

What Is Microblogging? *In* Lifewire (source: https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-microblogging-3486200 accessed on 04.12.2016)

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/infrastructure)

The world's most popular social networks, mapped *In* World Economic Forum (source: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/most-popular-social-networks-mapped?utm_content=buffer7b9ad&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer accessed on 02.02.2017)

Train of Hope - INTERN (Closed Group, invited Train of Hope volunteers only) - https://www.facebook.com/groups/684067255027279/

Official Facebook page, Train of Hope - Flüchtlingshilfe Wien (https://www.facebook.com/trainofhope.wien/)