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Distance and Suffering

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Humanitarian Discourse in the age of Mediatization

Anne Vestergaard

Doctoral School of Organisation
and Management Studies

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DISTANCE AND SUFFERING

HUMANITARIAN DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF MEDIATIZATION

Anne Vestergaard

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The Doctoral School of Organisation and Management Studies (OMS) is an interdisciplinary research environment at Copenhagen Business School for PhD students working on theoretical and empirical themes related to the organisation and management of private, public and voluntary organisations

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[1] Journal of Language and Politics, vol. 7, 3, 2008

[2] in Chouliaraki, L. & Morsing, M. (eds): Media, Organisations and Identity, Palgrave, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of May 2010, Danish Doctors without Borders (MSF) launched a campaign, which epitomizes the point and purpose of this thesis. The campaign was initiated with a newspaper ad, a relatively dense text with no imagery and a large heading, white letters on a black background**:**

'IS AN EMERGENCY NOT WORTH SUPPORTING UNTIL IT HAS BEEN ON TV?'

Under this heading, the full text reads:

> TV is able to do something quite extraordinary. It has an exceptional ability to get a message through. How often has one not followed world events directly from the couch? Or felt a little quiver, when the words 'breaking news' slide across the screen?
>
> Even the smallest things are on everybody's lips, if they have been on TV. If the beech has come into leaf. If somebody has won a song competition. Once it has been on TV, people rarely have doubts. One could, however, question the prioritization of what, not least which news, make it to TV. Especially when it comes to the emergencies of the world.
>
> Not a wrong word about the good efforts that are put into national collects and fundraising shows, which for instance helped Haiti. Our patients have received a lot of help this way and we are very grateful. But sometimes we wonder what it takes to get on screen. How bad must it be for people to make their way to TV and benefit from the attention which for some mean life and hope?
>
> We are referring to the 'forgotten emergencies'. Right now, a grave humanitarian and medical emergency is ravaging South Sudan. The country has long been haunted by countless violent attacks on the civil population. The children of South Sudan are suffering from pervasive malnutrition and the mortality of mothers is the highest in the world. It would appear this is not enough to make it to Danish TV, but hopefully enough that maybe you will help us with our work. And if you have read this far in the ad, fortunately that also goes to show that there are, after all, other media than TV. If one needs a little attention.
>
> REMEMBER SUDAN WHEN NOBODY ELSE DOES

The ad points to one of the main challenges of humanitarian organizations today, the fact of the harsh competition for visibility in a mediated public space, where concern for the common good does not always set the agenda. What is interesting about this ad, however, is not so much the frustrations of MSF at the media's role as gate keepers and agenda setters in public life. This is common knowledge - nobody in Denmark leaves primary school without understanding that such is the way of the world. What *is* interesting is that this is how MSF choose to appeal to their audiences. Where are the emaciated babies with eyes full of flies instead of tears? Where are the happy children that have been brought to safety, where is the doctor with his stethoscope against the skeletal child's chest? The appeal includes none of these traditional pity figures, neither in imagery nor in language. Neither compassion nor tender-heartedness organize the emotional logic of the appeal. Instead, it is a meta-appeal which displaces the guilt and shame associated with witnessing the suffering of fellow human beings from the safety of 'our couch', to the media and invites the audience to say: 'not me! I will not allow my moral identity to be shaped by the media'. In the campaign's second news paper ad, the relationship between public moral identity and popular culture is addressed explicitly and framed as a matter of compassion fatigue.

> Have we really become so cynical that it takes a large TV show, a campaign song and an ad with a celebrity actor, before we are willing to help? Is it understandable if we from time to time feel that we have had enough? Have we become weary of emergencies and relief work? We hope not.

In this address, the ad not only speaks to a certain kind of audience, it also constructs a particular position for the reader to fill. This position is associated with an identity which aligns not with the first 'we', but with the latter. The humanitarian appeal is performative in this way and the interest of this project is not only how the humanitarian organization creates and projects a certain image of itself and its cause, but also how these constructions at the same time set the frame for how audiences are able to understand themselves in relation to the cause, the people that are the core of the cause, and the organization which speaks and acts on their behalf.

The MSF campaign is distributed across media platforms and also includes a TV spot to be shown on several national TV channels and accessible also at the MSF website.

> The TV-spot shows a large one storey building in a night time setting in the middle of nowhere – indeed it could be almost anywhere. We see a young black boy being carried into the building on a stretch, not crying, not screaming or bleeding, but with an expression of severe tension on his face. Inside the building, we see the boy under a surgery lamp, two white-coated doctors bent over him. The light flickers and goes out. The screen turns black and there is complete silence. The scene shifts and, still in complete silence, we see a young, blond woman entering a - brightly lit – reception. Against the silence, we hear the amplified sound of pen against paper, as we see the woman signing a check with MSF's logo on it. At that moment, we hear the generator of the surgery room coming back on, the surgery lamp is lit and the scene is again filled with noise and movement as the doctors continue their work.

This powerful TV spot employs an 'it's not happening here but now' discourse, the strength of which comes from making immediate the relation between the spectator and the situation of need, not primarily in terms of shared humanity, but in terms of the effect that the individual spectator can have on the life of a suffering individual far away. 'What you do, right here and now, matters', the spot insists. It removes all barriers between action and effect, by omitting the intervention of bureaucracy, of geographical distance, of deliberations, prioritizations, logistics. In so doing, contrary to the news paper ad which problematizes mediatization, the TV spot exemplifies one of the 'extraordinary things' TV can do, namely bridging time and space, pulling into our sphere of experience, events that happen far away. In this way, the TV spot points to one issue that is central to this thesis, namely the issue of mediation and distance, which is discussed and theorized below and which each of my articles addresses in distinctive ways.

The campaign is also associated with direct mail action. A letter is sent out to all Danish households.

> The letter is laid out as a standard form from MSF, with the heading 'Testimony'. Under this is a printed box, with the typed letters 'destination' filled out in pencil '*South Sudan'*, '*Sidsel Lykke Nielsen'* (Danish female name), '*Doctors without Borders*. Underneath, a photo with ripped edges gives the impression of being stuck on with duck tape. The photo

> shows a young, blond, female MSF worker examining a crying black child who is being held by what appears to be his mother. On the opposite page is a hand-written letter in 'pencil' which starts: *I am sending my testimony from South Sudan, because I have witnessed a humanitarian and medical catastrophe.* In an odd mix of a highly personal and a somewhat institutionalized language, the letter goes on to explain that many people are dying. *'my patients hope and believe in peace and they believe in a brighter future. That is why I am telling my story'.* Another set of photographs are displayed, torn, wrinkled and with paper clips showing, portraying the young, blond woman consulting other black women and their children.

This letter's obvious attempts at creating authenticity points to yet another challenge of humanitarian communication, namely the problem that while media enable the bridging of time and space as we saw above, this immediacy may in fact be a 'detached immediacy' because its very mediation may become a filter that inscribes it in the perceptual realm of the fictional rather than the real. In this particular case, MSF attempt to maintain reality by inscribing a subjective voice and experience, embodied in pencil writing, in a simulated one-to-one communication.

Finally, in a news article posted on MSF's Danish website at the launch of the campaign on May 28th, the responsibility that was displaced to the media in the news paper ad, is extended and comes full circle between the public, the media and the humanitarian organizations themselves. One paragraph reads:

> In 2009, MSF published a report on South Sudan. The intention of the report was to get more relief agencies to move into the area and get more money for this work. But today, only few relief organizations are present and the media are generally not interested in this disaster.

MSF here point to the fact that where media cast their flash light not only determines the degree of attention and funding from private donors. It also determines- although this is not technically a necessarily implication - where the organizations do work. In this way, public humanitarian discourse, as this is constituted in a melting pot of voices, may have very real consequences for whose life is saved and whose is not.

Finally, the campaign makes use of social media. A facebook group has been set up, which asks participants to 'donate your status', ie. not to make a donation of money,

but to carry the message across the digital sphere. While this sort of online activism is interesting and the issue timely, it raises its own set of questions which are outside the scope of this thesis and which is these years being addressed by a vast body of research.

While each of the genres and media drawn upon in the MSF campaign illustrate and exemplify themes that are investigated in this thesis, the campaign as a whole also makes an important point about humanitarian communication, namely that it is always spread across a wide range of outlets which complement each other, not only in terms of the audiences it addresses, but also in terms of the identities it projects. The 'totality' of a humanitarian organization's identity is spread across news coverage, ads, brochures, members' magazines, face to face encounters, word-of-mouth, historical legacy etc. and it is in constant flux. There can be no way of examining the public identity of an organization as a finite totality and no way of determining what the sources of any individual's perception of an organization is. All we can ever hope to do is look at examples and find patterns that we can reasonably assume represent a discourse that is characteristic of the organization or of the sector at a given point in time.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME

This thesis explores the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life. When taking on the role as mediators between Western publics and distant sufferers, what conception of social responsibility do humanitarian organizations promote? What are the consequences of the institutional context of these organizations on the form of social responsibility that they are able to promote? In a historical perspective, what changes in these conceptualizations can we observe and to what extent can we understand them as resulting from institutional changes? These are empirical questions. They are asked with the assumption that the discourse of humanitarian organizations is at once a reflection of and a force in the configuration of dispositions in target publics. Enquiring about the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life, thus, means enquiring about the ways in which over the past 40 years, these organizations have given meaning to our relation to different sufferers and contributed to shaping our individual and collective conception of the scope and nature of our social responsibility. This is a theoretical question.

The nature of the role of organizations as public agents is understood in this thesis as constituted by the nature of the relationship constructed between the participants in humanitarian exchange – the organization, the 'donor' and the 'recipient'. The construction of these relationships is assumed to bear upon the space of possibility for the subject's moral agency as well as for his moral imaginary. Put simply, how humanitarian organizations, more or less implicitly, present the rationale of their operations has implications for the individual's actions, his reasons for action and more widely, for how he perceives of individual and collective social responsibility.

Due to this discursive understanding of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life, the thesis is based on analysis of appeal material from such organizations. It tries to understand humanitarian discourse today, at the back drop of its evolution since the 1970s, by asking if we can find can find significant changes in the ways in which the appeal sets up the relation between the three participants - with a particular interest in how the individual member of audience is positioned within and by these relations.

The fundamental nature of the relationship between humanitarian exchange participants is that it is mediated. It is mediated in the sense that there is no (or little) immediate physical contact between the organization and its audience, on the one hand, and the audience and the populations in need on the other hand. It is mediated also in the sense that the relations between these detached social entities are established via media technology. Thus, enquiring about the constitution of these relations becomes to a great extent a question of the capacity of media technologies (in the widest sense) to bridge the distance between participants and the implications of technological as well as semiotic features for the character of the relation established.

By inquiring about humanitarian organizations as public agents, I take an essentially normative starting point. I assume that the basic premise of humanitarianism is that each of us has a responsibility to alleviate suffering wherever we can, just like I assume that such a disposition is desirable for society and human kind in general. I do not, however, presuppose any kind of essentialism. I hear Hannah Arendt when she says that 'History tells us that it is by no means a matter of course for the spectacle of misery to move men to pity (Arendt 1990 (1963):70) and I concur when Keith Tester calls humanitarianism a cultural phenomenon (Tester 2010). Whether or not there is an essentially human component to compassion and humanitarianism, it is clear that morality is negotiated in social life and that private as well as public conscience is

subject to influence from multiple sources. This moderate social constructivist perspective is the point of departure for the questions that this thesis explores.

In the rest of this introduction, I set the theoretical and empirical frame for the articles that constitute the body of this thesis. First, I provide an introduction to the field of humanitarianism in terms of its ideological foundation, on the one hand, and its characteristics as institution on the other (in the sections *Humanitarianism* and *Legitimacy in the Humanitarian Field*). This lays the ground for understanding the consequences of the institutional context of humanitarian communication, which is theorized in the following section under *Discourse as Practice.* Here, I account for the conceptualization of social change in critical discourse analysis as the result of discursive struggles between different orders of discourse. I place the humanitarian discourse order within a landscape of such struggles, suggesting that humanitarianism occupies an ambiguous and fragile position, which renders it a highly unstable order. I pay attention in particular to 'mediatization' as a site of dependence and conflict for humanitarianism. Subsequently, under '*Discourse as Action'*, in setting the theoretical frame for understanding how humanitarian communication may contribute to shaping individual and collective conceptions of responsibility, I account for a view of discourse as performativity, implied by critical discourse analysis. This performative aspect of discourse is what endows it with an ethical dimension. Humanitarian communication is construed as essentially an exercise of bridging distance, which involves technological and semiotic mediation. The potential of such mediations to establish or advance a connectivity of such a nature as to cultivate a cosmopolitan sensibility is discussed in under *Mediation and Cosmopolitanism* and *Mediation and Proximity*.

HUMANITARIANISM

Humanitarianism is a moral sensibility demanding action on the part of the safe and secure, towards the suffering and endangered (Tester 2010). It is also a doctrine to promote human welfare based on the view that all human beings, by virtue of their sheer humanity, deserve respect and dignity and should be treated accordingly. Humanitarian organizations operationalize the basic belief that no individual should suffer into the demand that, whenever possible, assistance should be given to victims of war, oppression, hunger and other calamities (Riff 2002).

While a philanthropic imperative is included in the scriptures of most religions (Payton & Moddy 2008), the notion of humanitarianism as an institution has its historical origins in the 18th century, where the introduction of compassion into public life gave rise to a range of social reforms to alleviate suffering resulting from poverty as well as the abolition of slavery, religious toleration, amelioration of workers' conditions etc. (Arendt 1974, Boltanski 1999, Haskell 1985). In 1863, the formation of The International Committee of the Red Cross to alleviate suffering resulting from war can be seen as the beginning of organized compassion internationally. The Red Cross was also largely responsible for developing the other strand of international humanitarianism, namely international humanitarian law. During the course of the 20th century, a vast institutional machinery evolved to provide assistance to protect individuals from harm and to eliminate causes of suffering (Barnett 2009).

In contrast to humanitarianism, human rights impose a moral claim which is not based on compassion – the feeling of the safe toward the endangered - but on rights and freedoms to which humans are entitled merely by reason of being human. This entails that, unlike humanitarianism, human rights entitle the individual to make demands. Such entitlements can exist as shared norms of human moralities or as legal rights at a national or international level. There is little consensus, however, as to the precise nature and limits of human rights and the concept is subject to much philosophical dispute. The intellectual foundations of the concept can be traced through the history of philosophy and the concepts of natural law rights as far back as Classical Greece. The modern conception of human rights developed in response to the Second World War and led to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Modern human rights discourse draws on the enlightenment concept of natural rights developed by John Locke and Immanuel Kant, according to which rights are not contingent upon the customs and beliefs of a particular society, but universal (Freeman 2002, Nickel 2009).

Humanitarianism and Human Rights share the fundamental claim to the moral significance of the individual human being, the principle of humanity, but differ on several other counts: For humanitarianism, by virtue of being compassion based, any instance of suffering is in equal demand of action, regardless of what brought the suffering on or what the consequences of assisting might be. This deontological ethic gives rise to the defining humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence. Impartiality demands that assistance be based on need without

discrimination on the basis of communitarian characteristics such as nationality, race, religion, gender and political stance. Neutrality involves refraining from taking part in hostilities or any action that may benefit or disadvantage conflicting parties – including the reporting of violations of international law. Finally, independence demands that action is not contingent upon any party, such as states, who may directly or indirectly have a stake in the outcome of a conflict. In this way, humanitarianism is pragmatic and practical, about giving assistance to those in need without asking why they are in need. These principles serve to create a humanitarian space which is insulated from politics (Barnett 2009). Humanitarianism is a response to suffering, which already exists, a reaction to events that have already taken place.

While human rights organizations, in addition to that of humanity, share humanitarianism's principle of independence, they differ on crucial other counts. In contrast to the neutrality principle, human rights activism is essentially about denunciation. Based to a large extent on witnessing, human rights violations are made public and perpetrators condemned. Human rights organizations operate by mobilizing constituencies powerful enough to stop perpetrators and as a consequence human rights activism is inherently partial and political (Ignatieff 2001). While this mode of operation is in the first order reactive it has a remedial potential which eludes the nurturing humanitarianism. The human rights agenda – variously focused on social, economic or civil rights - is centrally concerned with root causes and with justice, expressed as formal concern with respect for law and due process as well as a determination to both end abuses and bring perpetrators to justice. Finally, quite opposite to humanitarianism, human rights doctrine stresses the importance of putting on public record evidence of abuses regardless of the outcome of this, making a forensic concern with witnessing, providing testimony, documenting and collecting evidence central to the human rights movement as such.

LEGITIMACY IN THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

Although in terms of funding, support, organizational proficiency and efficiency this could be argued to be the golden age of humanitarianism, in fact, humanitarianism is widely seen as in crisis (Donini et al 2008, Rieff 2002, Macrae 2000). I construe of this as a crisis of legitimacy, which is largely due to fundamental tensions in the field, one

concerning politicization, another institutionalization, and finally one concerns marketization.

POLITICIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

Recent years have seen the notion of human rights increasingly invoked by humanitarian actors. The humanitarian sector is increasingly incorporating human rights agendas and in so doing, it is increasingly becoming associated with political power. The shift from a needs-based orientation toward distant others, to a rights-based orientation is what has come to be called 'new humanitarianism'. This rights based approach is argued to serve the purpose of providing a perceptual link and a sense of coherence between relief and development agendas – increasingly undertaken by the same organizations (Darcy 2004). The adoption of a human rights discourse involves a discursive shift under which victims or beneficiaries become right-holders and humanitarian agencies become their advocates, rather than their beneficiaries engaged in gift-giving and altruism (Nelson and Dorsey 2003). This has occurred in parallel with evolving development theory in the 1980s and 1990s and shares the characteristics of new development discourse: people-centeredness, empowerment, universality, dignity and anti-charity (Darcy 2004). The shift in part grows out the problem of paternalism that haunts relief workers: accusations against humanitarianism as simply the moral conscience of wealthy philanthropists or latter day imperialists. The new discourse strives to give humanitarianism the legitimacy of being truly action in terms of a commitment to humanity, rather than just an expression of guilt or condensation (Tester 2010).

The incorporation of a human rights agenda into humanitarianism, however, means also its politicization. Democracy promotion and building responsible states become included in humanitarian activities – agendas once defined as political by those in the humanitarian sector precisely because they touch upon governance and power (Darcy 2004) - and criticism abounds that involvement in international justice issues will by necessity come to legitimate associations with state interests and military humanitarian intervention, by some viewed as profoundly unhumanitarian (Rieff 2002). Testifying to this tendency, is the post cold war introduction of a vast number of laws, norms and principles that have created the humanitarian imperative – the claim that international community can and should protect populations at risk (responsibility to protect) in the name of humanity (Eliason 2002).

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

Until the 1990s, humanitarianism barely existed as a field. There were only few major relief organizations, including the ICRC, MSF, Save the children and Oxfam and although these organizations shared the basic principles of humanitarianism, there was no concerted effort to establish standards to regulate and define the field (Barnett 2005). However, this changed as a result of the introduction of accountability demands on the one hand deriving from 'new public management' principles that grew out of the neoliberal orthodoxy of the 1980s and on the other hand mounting evidence that some humanitarian interventions were causing more harm than good as in "one of the defining events of twentieth century humanitarianism: the 1994 genocide in Rwanda" (Vaux 2006: 246). In the 1990s, a reliance on specialized knowledge emerges and standards are developed: methods for calculating results, procedures to improve efficiency, best practice standards etc, a rationalization that involved both professionalization and bureaucratization (Barnett 2005). The spread of managerial principles and advancement of capitalist logic and consumerism, however meet contestation from within and outside the field and is widely viewed as conflicting with the culture of voluntarism, democracy and grass root action, which has traditionally been its characteristics (Staggenborg 1997).

MARKETIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN FIELD

Non-profit organizations have increasingly adopted the approaches and values of the private market, leading to what some call marketization of the non-profit sector (Salamon 1993, Weisbrod 1998). While the issue of marketization is to no great extent problematized in the humanitarian literature it is reflected in an explosion of literature on NGO marketing and charity branding since the mid 1990s, and in the regular substitution of the term 'fundraising' with the term 'marketing' in the sector. What it means is, essentially, that humanitarian organizations (at least) in their relation to donor publics are coming to operate increasingly on market terms, increasingly influenced by a logic of supply and demand. In addition, in an effort to access new funding sources due to a great extent to increased competition for public as well as private funding, over the past several years many NGOs have aggressively courted private sector partners, making public relations alliances with international corporations which for their part seek to raise their philanthropic profile (Stoddard 2003). Needless to say, marketization is by many viewed as harmful to democracy and

citizenship because of suspicion as to its impact on non-profit organizations' ability to create and maintain a strong, autonomous civil society (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004).

LEGITIMACY AND THE GROUNDS FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

It is a key argument of this thesis that the humanitarian sector suffers a crisis of legitimacy due to the institutional contradictions brought about by processes of politicization, institutionalization and marketization, which derive from conflicting expectations from actors on which the sector relies. Conditions of legitimacy are particularly complex in the case of humanitarian organizations due to their doubly representative nature. Humanitarian organizations are representatives of the populations and individuals in need, the alleviation of which is their raison d'etre. It is their prime purpose to act on behalf of people in need. At the same time, however, humanitarian organizations are representatives of their local donor publics. Donor publics select these organizations to represent their concern for distant others, to select worthy causes and identify appropriate remedies on their behalf. Thus, as representatives, the organizations have the power to administer resources – material and moral- on behalf of their dual constituencies and it is by virtue of this power, that organizations are under a constant pressure to legitimate themselves.

The question of legitimacy of NGOs is generally discussed in the literature as legitimacy with respect to recipient publics, ie. beneficiaries. The last decade has seen growing questioning of NGO performance (Biekart 1999, Fowle 1997), representativeness (Pearce 1997, Slim 2003), impartiality (Ossewarde 2008, Darcy 2004, Rieff 2002, Eliason 2002, Tester 2010) and so-called 'downward' accountability (Slim 2002, Edwards and Hulme 1995, Saxby 1996, O'Dwyer and Unerman 2008, Unerman and O'Dwyer 2006, O'Dwyer 2004). This literature does not consider the legitimacy of NGOs as representatives of donor publics; the extent to which their moral claim is legitimate. Legitimacy in this sense is essentially about the grounds of humanitarian assistance, in philosophical as well as psychological terms.

The question of the grounds of humanitarian assistance is inexorably tied to the question as to whether the same moral requirements that hold within a community apply also outside of the community. This question is as old as the field of ethics itself, but has gained renewed interest in the wake of globalization's expanding spheres of interaction (Chatterjee 2004, Proctor 1998). In the development literature, this question has entered the relatively new subfield of Development Ethics under

headings such as 'the spatial scope of beneficence' (Smith 2000) and 'caring at a distance' (Silk 2000, 2004, Gilkes 2000), just like the field of human geography has in recent years taken up the issue under headings such as 'moral geographies' (Korf 2007) 'geographies of responsibility' (Proctor 1998, Clark 2005), 'geographies of generosity' (Barnett and Land 2007), both giving new life to discussions on the classical dichotomies of rationality and emotion, impartiality and partiality, universalism and particularism. At the heart of this debate, as it is appropriated by Development Ethics and Human Geography, is the introduction of an Ethics of Care (Gilligan 1982, Tronto 1993, Hekman 1995), which adds to it a psychological dimension and in so doing turns ethical precepts into a question of motivation. The Ethics of Care raises caring, nurturing and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships to the status of foundational moral importance thus "reclaiming 'care' as a social, and thus political, relation" (Popke 2006: 505). The question of how the scope of care may be extended to include different and distant others - from 'intimate caring' to 'humanitarian caring' (Barnett and Land 2007), finds two answers in this debate. One set of responses link a disposition of care to some notion of justice, as a set of principled, more-or-less universal precepts against which acts of judgment can be made. (Smith 2000, Gasper and Truong 2005, Korf 2006). A second response emphasizes care as a fundamental feature of our being human. Such an approach is grounded on a recognition of our common vulnerability and dependence upon others, such that care itself is a kind of universal, 'an activity that binds us all' (Williams, 2002: 509 cited in Proctor 1998). Responsibility toward others, under this (often Levinas inspired) conceptualization, would be located not in the abstract universals of justice, but rather in the recognition of our intersubjective being (Barnett 2005, Popke 2006).

A vast, but equally recent, body of literature addresses the grounds of assistance from a donor behavior point of view. The majority of this research is concerned with the effects of various forms of demographic factors on giving behavior and 'consumer charitable support behavior'. "*The literature has not adequately addressed other equally important issues such as social norms for helping and donor perceptions. Also ignored are other dimensions of the organization's solicitation strategy, such […] the portrayal of the help recipient*" (Bendapudi et al 1996:36). A small literature has more recently emerged which, growing out of consumer psychology, addresses the question of donor motivation. Motivation here is categorized as egoistic or altruistic, the former related to material as well as psychological, cognitive or social rewards and punishments, the latter

associated primarily with empathy (Bendapudi 1996, Bennett and Sargeant 2005, Sargeant and Woodliffe 2007). A recurring observation in these studies is that empathy may lead to distress and maladaption and therefore for positive response, appeals must invite audiences to imagine how the beneficiary feels rather than how he himself would feel in the beneficiary's place. Empirical studies based in consumer psychology, draw on these types of predefined motivational categories and utilize surveys or response measurements to assess the effectiveness of different types of appeals. A typical such study, in which 1000 participants responded to a web-based questionnaire which elicited respondents' evaluation of a set of appeal materials, finds' empathy' and 'self-efficacy' to be central determinants of donation intention (Basil et al 2008). Based on similar stimuli, a set of laboratory experiments with 140 subjects found 'responsibility' and 'prosocial norm' to be likewise central determinants to donation intention (Basil et al. 2006). In a somewhat more sophisticated research design, in which actual responses to almost 5000 individual TV appeals were elicited, it was found that donations increased with appeals which were characterized by negative rather than positive emotion and focused on benefits to the beneficiary rather than the donor (Fisher et al 2008). Overall, the attention to the psychological dimensions of altruism is very limited.

Although in each their way absolutely central to the subject field of present work, the thesis does not attempt to straddle these diverse, but interrelated, literatures, - from moral and political philosophy through moral psychology to consumer psychology - in their various approaches to the foundations of humanitarian assistance. Rather, it falls between them, addressing motivations as social constructs, investigating the reasons for action more or less explicitly presented in the discourses of humanitarian actors, under the fundamental social constructivist assumption that these contribute to shaping the dispositions of wider publics. In this way, motivations for action are construed as reflected in the discursive representations of sufferers, benefactors and donors.

Ethics of representation in relation to portrayals of distant sufferers has, although somewhat sporadically, been an issue of concern above all in cultural studies since the 1970s. The iconography of suffering used by the news industry as well as the in humanitarian fundraising has been frequently under fire for patronizing, victimizing, objectifying and fetishizing sufferers (Malkki 1996, Campbell 2004, Cohen 2001, Moeller 1999, Moeller 1999, Ruddick 2003, Lidchi 1999, Smillie 1995, Lissner 1981).

Belonging to a cultural studies tradition, the overall objective of this literature is diagnostic, aiming to demonstrate colonialist and imperialist cultural tendencies. While present work shares the interest in representations of suffering – and humanitarian text more widely- as a cultural diagnostic, its overall concern is with the performative dimension of such text. In taking this approach to discourse on suffering, the work follows Lilie Chouliaraki's Analytics of Mediation (2006), a framework for analyzing suffering on the news, the central concern of which is with how these representations contribute to shaping viewers' dispositions vis-à-vis distant others. Recent work by Chouliaraki has expanded this line of enquiry to humanitarian discourse, aiming toward identifying the 'distinct forms of public agency toward vulnerable others' that the 'rhetorical practices of humanitarian communication' propose (2010: 108). Where the approach taken in this thesis differs most significantly from that of Chouliaraki, is in its institutional perspective by which present work strives to understand how the representational practices of humanitarian organizations come about as the result of various institutional tensions.

In summary, three distinct bodies of literature border on the field of humanitarian discourse, coming from ethics of development, moral psychology, NGO marketing and post-colonial cultural studies respectively. What is critically absent from each of these is a dynamic dimension, which allows them to see global responsibility as an evolving socio-cultural phenomenon. As the core concern of this thesis is with how global responsibility is constructed in negotiations between various social actors, as the result of semiotic, technological and institutional mediations, the core literature which theoretically frames the thesis, comes from Critical Discourse Analysis and Media Sociology. In the following, I account for how this framing contributes to a new conceptualization of humanitarian communication as an emerging field of inquiry. First, under *Discourse as Practice*, I map out a discourse theoretical conceptualization of social change, which takes its point of departure in institutional tensions, conceptualized as discursive struggles between orders of discourse. Second, under *Discourse as Action,* I introduce the notion of mediation as a means of conceptualizing the diffusion of humanitarian dispositions in culture.

DISCOURSE AS PRACTICE

The Dialectical-Relational approach (DRA) to Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is, as theory as well as method, oriented toward the depiction of mechanisms of social change. This depiction is based on a number of fundamental assumptions about the relationship between discourse and the social world. These assumptions are associated with the notions of dialecticality, interdiscursivity and power. First, CDA takes discourse and social practice to be in a *dialectic* relationship, where discourse is at once constrained by social structures and constitutive of them. The view of discourse as both constituted and constituting, implies that discursive practices are influenced by societal forces and structures, which do not have an exclusively discursive nature. *"The discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people's heads, but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material social structures*" (Fairclough 1992:66). By holding discourse to be partly constituted, CDA is distinguished from more radically social constructivist theories, such as the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (Phillips & Jørgensen 2002)

By virtue of their socially constitutive nature, changing discourse practices may contribute to change in knowledge and belief systems as well as in social relations and social identities. Discursive change occurs when the discourse types (discourses and genres) of one discourse order - the delimiting institutional frame of language use – are transferred into another discourse order, by a dynamic referred to as interdiscursivity. *Interdiscursivity* refers to the co-articulation of different discourses and genres in a communicative event. Through new articulations of discourse types, boundaries change, both within the order of discourse and between orders of discourse- as a sign of and a driving force in discursive – and thereby socio-cultural change. While a discourse order is relatively stable and constituted by predominantly naturalized discourse types, change is created by drawing on existing discourses in new ways, but the possibilities for change are limited by power relations which determine the access of different actors to different discourses. Thus, the seemingly limitless possibilities for combination in discursive practice are limited and constrained by *power* and power struggles. The boundaries between discourse orders are sites of social struggle and conflict, and discourse orders can be seen as areas of cultural hegemony with dominant groups fighting to maintain a particular structuring within and between orders of discourse. The notion of hegemony, thus, is central for the way change is theorized in relation to the evolution of power relations in CDA. Drawing on

Gramsci, DRA views hegemony as consensus-based power built on alliances, rather than the domination of subordinate classes. Hegemony thus understood is the result of negotiations of meaning in which all social groups participate, a constant struggle around the points of least stability in or between discourse orders to construct or destruct alliances. As a result, hegemony is never stable but changing and incomplete, and consensus always a matter of degree – a "contradictory and unstable equilibrium" (Fairclough 2003). Discursive practice can be seen as an aspect of hegemonic struggle that contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the order of discourse of which it is part and thus through hegemony we see discursive practice as part of a larger social practice involving power relations.

As discursive events are not merely instantiations of structures, but also producers of structure, both events and structures are (more or less) ideologically invested. DRA understands ideology as constructions of reality, built into the various dimensions of the form/meaning of discursive practices, which contribute to production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination (Fairclough 1992, 1995). Following John Thompson (1995), ideology is conceived as a practice that operates in processes of meaning creation in everyday life, where meaning is mobilized in order to maintain power relations. A crucial aspect of the ideological practice of discourse, is its power to interpellate subjects. By interprellation, the subject is positioned in ideology in a way which disguises the actions and effects of ideology and gives the subject an illusory autonomy. But, in Fairclough's conception, this type of interpellation requires a highly naturalized discourse. In fact, subjects are interpellated from many positions in various and contradictory ways and contradictory interpellation may be experienced as uncertainty or confusion, potentially leading to contestation. Uncertainty may give rise to awareness on the part of the subject and in this way contradictory interpellation bears the seeds of resistance, since the elements that challenge the dominant meanings equip people with resources for contestation. Texts have several meaning potentials that may contradict one another and are open to several interpretations. Resistance is possible even though people are not aware of the ideological dimensions of their practice. "*subjects are ideologically positioned but they are also capable of acting creatively to make their own connections between the diverse practices and ideologies to which they are exposed and to restructure positioning structures and practices*" (Fairclough 1992:91) In other words, contradictory interpellation becomes the site and resource of subjects to act

individually or collectively as agents, with critique or opposition to ideological practices.

THE DISCURSIVE LANDSCAPE OF HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Humanitarian organizations occupy an ambiguous and fragile position between private and public discourse orders, political discourse orders, the discourse order of the media and that of the market. This is a fragile position because of the radical lack of autonomy of the humanitarian organization, which relies fully on the resources of other powerful actors and functions essentially as a representative. By virtue of this representative nature, the borders of the humanitarian discourse order are porous. It is an ambiguous position because the discourse order of humanitarian organizations is constituted in its discursive and non-discursive relations to these adjacent fields and marked not only by negotiations with them, but also by the negotiations of relations between these other orders of discourse. As we saw above, the political discourse order is to some extent appropriating the humanitarian, by perpetuating a drift towards human rights discourse, while at the same time the discourse order of local recipients contests this appropriation by insisting on neutrality and swearing humanitarian organizations to silence. Further, the general appropriation of public discourse by the private order, pushes the boundaries of the humanitarian discourse order further into the private, increasingly making its cause a private, individual concern, rather than a common, public concern, adopting motivations that derive from a psychological, emotional discourse, rather than a public, political discourse. The media field itself is placed in the middle of all these struggles, straddling public and private discourse orders, transforming a public source-discourse into something for consumption in a domestic environment. The discourse order of the media is shaped by the tension between oppositional public sources, often of a political nature, and private receivers which act as counterpoints of attraction for the media discourse, with the order of the market, reinforcing this tension. (Fairclough 1995) In this way, the discourse order of the media, by virtue of its own discursive struggles, is probably the most forceful cause of struggle and contradiction in the humanitarian order.

These tensions between adjacent social fields are mirrored in discursive struggles internally to the humanitarian discourse order where recent years have seen intense controversy between political and apolitical humanitarianism as well as between

professionalized and grass-roots activist discourses (Hopgood 2006). These struggles, as we shall see, clearly lead to contradictory interpellations, which could reasonably be argued to render the practice of humanitarian organizations of a less deterministically ideological nature, leaving it open to contestation, opposition and critique.

MEDIATIZATION AS SOCIAL CHANGE

The discursive landscape of humanitarian discourse is characterized by these struggles and tensions causing it to be highly unstable and less than coherent. Humanitarian organizations' dependence on the media to bring distant suffering into the experiential sphere of Western publics, renders the order of the media immensely powerful with respect to defining the relation between these organizations and their publics. Internal and external struggles of the discourse order of the media propagate to the humanitarian discourse order and is reflected in agenda setting, the staging of action, professionalized communication strategies etc. The historical process by which the order of the media appropriate other institutions is these years being debated under the notion of 'mediatization'. According to mediatization theorists, the 'mediatization of society' (Hjarvard 2008) -alongside 'globalization', 'individualization', and 'commercialization' – belongs to the 'metaprocesses' that *'influence democracy and society, culture, politics, and other conditions of life over the longer term'* (Krotz 2007). Mediatization, thus, refers to the historical process by which the media come to play an increasingly important role in the organization of cultural and social reality, according to Hjarvard, as a process of *'high modernity'*, where the *'media become an integrated part of other institutions such as politics, work, family and religion as more and more of these institutional activities take place through both interactive and mass media'*. The intervention of media in institutional practices renders them subject to a "media logic".

> *The term 'media logic' refers to the institutional and technological modus operandi of the media, including the ways in which media distribute material and symbolic resources and operate with the help of formal and informal rules. The logic of the media influences the form communication takes, such as how politics is described in media texts (Altheide & Snow, 1979); media logic also influences the nature and function of social relations as well as the sender, the content and the receivers of the communication. The extent to which the situation amounts to actual submission or only greater dependence on media will vary between institutions and sectors of society.* (Hjarvard 2008: 113)

In this conception of mediatization, then, the role of the media in social and cultural reality is viewed as impact: as unidirectional development, with homogenous, isolatable causality. By incorporating a discursive perspective into the notion of mediatization, however, I suggest that the process of mediatization should be viewed dialectically, as constituted in discursive (and non-discursive) struggles between different orders of discourse and that neither the dynamics nor the implications of the process of mediatization can be understood fully without paying attention to the process of 'mediation', to be developed below.

DISCOURSE AS ACTION

It follows from the conception of discourse as dialectically related to the social, that discourse is not only representation but also action. Each instance of language use has a performative dimension, a potential to transform aspects of knowledge and beliefs, social relations and identities in its social context. The discursive practice and language use associated with the discourse order of humanitarian organizations contributes to shaping historically embedded perceptions of the notion of humanitarianism and of individual and collective social responsibility, through semiotically articulated standards of rationality, representations, presuppositions etc. Similarly, how relations between interactive participants in a given discursive practice are exercised, contributes to the construction of social relations between these participants. By means of addressing an audience within the conventions of a given genre, a relation of a particular nature is established between addresser and addressee. Discursive events regularly draw on a range of genres, rather than expressing a genre in a 'pure' form, and so the relations between participants may be – and commonly are– ambiguously constructed. Humanitarian genres may variously construct relations to addressees as an entity which provides them with a service, makes a claim to them, or presents them with an offer, which in turn variously positions the addressee as apprentice, complicit or consumer again constructing a relationship to the populations of 'the South' as variously one of beneficience, partnership or trade. Relational identities which are embedded in the genres, may be rearticulated as representations in the text itself or may conflict with these. Finally, the discursive event constructs the identity of the audience, the potential donor, rarely by means of representation per se, but by means of an address that

demarcates the identity of the member of audience, by projecting a subject position which can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it. Put differently, any mass media text can be said to have an implied reader, an imaginary addressee with particular values, preoccupations and common-sense understandings. In constructing an imaginary audience, the addresser is placed in the powerful position to attribute values and attitudes to audiences. An actual member of audience who identifies to some extent with the imaginary one, is likely to take up the positions it offers sometimes unconsciously and uncritically, as an interpellation. Conversely, distance of identity may elicit awareness of the positioning and render addressees more critical of it, opening this subject position as a site of discursive struggle. The social relations and identities thus set up by genres and discourses, always enact power structures and potentially contribute to their transformation. In the case of the humanitarian discourse order, negotiations of genres and discourses are very much associated with negotiations of power, where the asymmetry in material resources between participants is variously articulated, enacted and contested in discursive struggle.

MEDIATION AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

When humanitarian discourse systematically partakes in processes of mediation, this means not merely that the content of humanitarian communication is transformed as it passes through the particular channel of a medium, as it would be understood in transmission models of communication (Lasswell 2009 (1948), Hjarvard 2008). Mediation, here, is understood as a discursive practice and thereby it is understood as extending beyond the point of contact between media texts and their consumers. Through mediation, humanitarian communication becomes implicated in the fundamentally dialectical process in which institutionalized media of communication are involved in the general circulation of symbols in everyday life. Mediation involves the movement from one text to another, from one discourse to another, from one event to another with a constant transformation of meanings as texts circulate in writing, in speech and audiovisual forms, and as we, individually and collectively, directly and indirectly, contribute to their production (Silverstone 1999). In this way, mediation is a fundamentally dialectical notion which requires us to address the processes of communication as both institutionally and technologically driven and embedded. By this process communication changes the social and cultural environment that supports it as well as the relationships that participants, both

individual and institutional, have to that environment and to each other. At the same time, the social is itself a mediator: institutions and technologies as well as the meanings that are delivered by them are mediated in the social processes of reception and consumption. Any process of mediation of an area of culture or social life is two-way in this manner. Media work not merely by transmitting discrete textual units for discrete moments of reception, but "through a process of environmental transformation which, in turn, transforms the conditions under which any future media can be produced and understood" (Couldry 2008).

In this way, the concept of mediation connects the media as text with the media as institution and technology. The study of mediation gives attention to both the institutions and technologies through which the circulation of media discourse takes place. It couples the investigation of practices of text production in the journalistic field and the relations of media to trans-organizational networks with that of media discourse and the attempt to understand the impact of media on public life today.

It is by virtue of their transformative powers, their character of action, that discourse and mediation attain an ethical dimension. Discourse is not merely a representation of reality and suggestions or directions for action. Discursive practice sets the frame for how we conceive of the world, it constructs a reality for us within which social actors, including ourselves, are positioned in particular ways vis-à-vis each other and this conception of the world has implications not just for our rationalizations about but likely also for our actions in social reality. The ethical question, then, becomes the question of how power is embedded and enacted in particular discursive practices, shaping the actions of social actors within and outside of discourse.

Thus, while under '*Discourse as Practice*' above, I set the framing for the empirical questions of the thesis, oriented towards an understanding of the dynamics that bring about observable changes in humanitarian communication, the perspective on *Discourse as Action* allows us to theorize how humanitarian communication via mediation, becomes part of the circulation of symbols in everyday life, not only reflecting but also affecting, the moral distance between Western publics and distant sufferers. Understanding the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life as a question of how humanitarian communication has contributed to evolving collective conceptions of humanitarian responsibility, is essentially a question of the dynamics in

the construction of public ethics, specifically the negotiation of the spatial scope of responsibility. At the heart of this issue, is the question of connectivity; to what extent is it possible for humanitarian communication to bridge geographical distance, so as to close moral distance.

MEDIATION AS CONNECTIVITY

As discussed above, humanitarian discourse is closely associated with and reliant upon (mass) media as the means by which the need of people outside of our immediate sphere of contact is brought to our attention. This is what mediation is fundamentally about; the bridging of time and space in communication. This ability to overcome distance, according to Tomlinson (1999) gives rise to one of the deep cultural transformations of our time. As a prime factor in processes of globalization, mediation contributes to a deterritorialization of cultural experience, whereby temporally and spatially distant influences come to penetrate local experience. Because mediation brings distant events into local experiential spheres, physically bounded spaces become less important – *"where one is located has less and less to do with what one knows and experiences"* (Meyrowitz 1985, vii-viii). Mediation thus has the capacity to bring us phenomenologically closer and provide socio-cultural immediacy – the sense of co-presence of faraway others. By enabling the real-time witnessing of faraway events, mediation may serve to closing the cultural and moral distance between people who live far away from each other and providing a sense of involvement with distant events and lives. Tomlinson points out, though, that an understanding of mediation as bringing distant events into localities is not sufficient. The process of 'passing through the medium' must be considered. Direct, local face-to-face interaction and experience must be distinguished from the qualitatively different order of mediated experience. The means of communication are never transparent but always intrinsically shape communication by virtue of the complex set of semiotic codes, conventions, formats and production values that it employs (Corner 1995, Abercombie 1996). This means that the connectivity that mediation offers is always subject to interventions of technology and the semiotic modes that the technology of the medium puts to use. Immediacy in the strict sense of the self-dissolution of the medium is never attainable. Tomlinson suggests that the development of modern communication can be understood as the constant struggle to deliver the promise of connectivity while diminishing the effects of technological intervention (ibid).

This tension between the promise of connectivity and the intervention of technology is mirrored in two dominant narratives about the ethical potential of mediation (Chouliaraki 2006). The celebratory narrative views mediation as expanding audiences' community into a global village by virtue of co-presence in a mediated public, thereby increasing awareness of distant others and concern for their misfortunes (McLuhan 1964, Maffesoli 1993). The constant flow of images and information on our screens, opens up the local world of the spectator to the sight of the other and to non-local experiences. This contact enables the reflexive process by which the spectator begins to relate to the other and may do something. The increasing diffusion of information and images through the media help to stimulate and deepen a sense of responsibility. In this way, visibility and reflexivity contain the promise of a global sense of responsibility, which may translate into a public-political consciousness (Giddens 1990, Thompson 1995, Tomlinson 1999). Critics of this view contest the idea that mere co-presence is sufficient to constitute a public and that mere witnessing creates connectivity. Rather than responsibility, it is argued, the mediation of misfortune may foster apathy and acceptance of the banality of suffering or 'compassion fatigue' (Chouliaraki 2006, Tester 2001).

The pessimistic narrative dismisses the connective potential of mediation as an illusion (Baudrillard 1988, Habermas 1989, Robins 1994, Ignatieff 1998, Sontag 2003). The intervention of technology, in this view, causes the mediated reality to be sanitized, cut off from the raw sensations of the body by means of technological perfection. The distinction between reality and fiction loses its relevance due to technological processes of editing and individual interventions such as fast tracking and zapping and so the media may present us with the spectacle of suffering but not with its authenticity. Further skepticism derives from the imbalance in the material relationship between the audience which uses the media and the suffering and miserable other in the media, where the position of the audience is one of relative leisure and safety and the sufferer potentially is in a position of absolute destitution (Tester 2001). The embeddedness of the scene of suffering in the materiality of both technology and the domestic milieu, severs the reality of suffering from its own nexus of sensations and reinserts suffering into another nexus of sensations – the spectator's own immediate states and moods (Chouliaraki 2010). Due to this embedding, distant suffering is held to remain distances and discontinuous experience that press less demandingly on the spectator's moral sensibilities, than events in his own immediate sphere. The

domesticity of suffering is thought in fact not only to disable connectivity but indeed deepen distance because events we follow in the media for the most part do not impinge directly on our own lives and we lack the ability to intervene in the events we see.

Tied to the process of mediation as it is, the question regarding humanitarian discourse is the question of whether it is capable of bridging the geographical and cultural distance in such a way as to also close the moral distance. Can distant others be endowed with humanness or will they always remain radical and irrevocably alteriorities? Echoing the celebratory narrative discussed above, is the mere awareness of distant others and the mediated witnessing of their suffering sufficient to evoke action or does the intervention of technology and domesticity remove suffering from the real to such an extent as to render action irrelevant? The position taken here, following Chouliaraki, is that these questions fail to take into account the performative dimension of mediated discourse, the view of mediation as action (Chouliaraki, 2006).

MEDIATION AND COSMOPOLITANISM

Humanitarian texts are performative: they enact forms of agency towards suffering, which may or may not be followed up by their publics. Humanitarian organizations may moralize their audiences by habituation, by systematically promoting ethical values and cultivating dispositions to action, through the repetitive use of stories on the misfortunes of the human condition. What this performative role of the texts points to, however, is that the humanitarian organization *"does not simply address a constituency ready for social action, but that they have the power to constitute this audience as a body of action in the process of narrating and visualizing distant events"* (Chouliaraki 2008:832). Humanitarian discourse in this sense contributes to the conditions of possibility for public action and it is these conditions that we need to analyze so as to understand how rather than promoting indifference and apathy towards distant others, humanitarian discourse may advance an ethics of care and responsibility, and cultivate an ideal identity for humanitarian audiences as citizens of the world – as cosmopolitans.

The notion of cosmopolitanism as a moral ideal of respect and responsibility for all fellow human beings, which transcends cultural, political and geographical boundaries, has become increasingly important in the past 10 years. Originating with the Greek Stoics' idea that citizenship should first and foremost be to the cosmos, it was further

developed by Kant in his 1795 'Perpetual Peace' essay. According to Kant, all rational beings are members in a single moral community. This membership is a citizenship in the political sense, in that members share the characteristics of freedom, equality, and independence. Their common laws are the laws of morality, grounded in reason. Based on this cosmopolitan idea, Kant famously advocated a 'league of nations' an international legal order, which was to ensure true and world-wide peace. Indeed, such institutions as the International Court of Justice and the International Red Cross, both originating at the end of the 19th century, are in each their way examples of this cosmopolitan ideal institutionally realized.

In recent years, the cosmopolitan idea has resurfaced, most notably in socio-political philosophy. The disasters of the twentieth century as well social forces of globalization have given new impetus to the idea of cosmopolitan justice that Kant first expressed. Contemporary theorists such as David Held, Jurgen Habermas, Craig Calhoun and Ulrich Beck develop the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism into a political theory which emphasizes the emergence of international public law (Held 2003, Habermas 2003, Calhoun 2002, Beck 2002). While advocates of such a cosmopolitan politics may diverge on the question of the subordination of regional, national and local sovereignties to an overarching legal framework, they share the core idea of transnational interdependence and common commitments that reach beyond the local community. According to Beck, in a world of global crises and dangers produced by civilization, the old differentiation between the national and the international loses its relevance and a new cosmopolitan realism becomes essential to survival (Beck 2006). For Beck, whose suggestion of a cosmopolitan realism has set a new trend in sociology, cosmopolitanism is not exclusively a matter of transnational governance but a manifestation of a wider 'cosmopolitan outlook' at the individual level

*In its most general meaning, it represents a very specific approach to dealing with otherness in society – and among societies. This type of cosmopolitanism should be distinguished from nationalism and particularism, but also from universalism, by reference to the idea that in our thinking, our actions, and our living together, the recognition of otherness and the renunciation of the egoistic insistence on our own interests should be adopted as a maxim. (*Beck & Grande 2007: 70-71, see also Nussbaum 1996)

MEDIATION AND PROXIMITY

While most cosmopolitanisms share the idea of a figure with a cultural disposition which recognizes global belonging, involvement and responsibility and can integrate these broader concerns into everyday life practices, conflicting rationalizations underlie them. One dominant narrative defines the cosmopolitan disposition as the awareness of the wider world as significant for us in our locality. According to this view, responsibility for the other for the other's sake is morally inconceivable. It takes its point of departure in the view of morality as based on proximity, as formulated by Bauman *"morality which we have inherited from pre-modern times – the only morality we have – is a morality of proximity, and as such is woefully inadequate in a society in which all important action is action on distance"* (Bauman 1993:217-218, quoted in Tomlinson). This leads Tomlinson to contend that "*the moral-existential effort required to do anything with the experiences available in media technologies has to come from other sources – ultimately from within the situated life-world of the self" (*Tomlinson 1999: 204*)*. He suggests that cosmopolitanism emerges in modern societies as a solidary individualism in which the building of self-identity depends on an increasing reflexive awareness of relations with others. This, according to Tomlinson, means that to act in one's self-interest is not necessarily to do so in a narrowly utilitarian way, but indeed involves the self-justification that comes from acts of mutuality. Moral engagement thus becomes less a case of the formal rational commitment to a set of abstract ideals and responsibilities, than an act of self-fulfillment. Thus the modern reflective subject *'in the intention of realizing itself, acts towards changing the social world'* (Berking 1996: 201).[1]

The other main narrative, advocates cosmopolitanism on the basis of shared humanity. Following Ulf Hannerz, Chouliaraki and Silverstone conceptualize cosmopolitanism as based on an attitude of fundamental *"willingness to engage with the other… an intellectual and aesthetic openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity"* (Hannerz, 1990: 239). The cosmopolitan is a model identity that we should strive for as participants in the global space of appearance, as we engage with the 'other' in a dialectic of proximity and distance in processes of mediation (Chouliaraki 2006, Silverstone 2007). Silverstone states, in line with the view taken in this thesis, that since mediation provides us with an orientation to the world through its representations of ourselves and those who are different from us, mediation also holds the power to advance either the marginalization or inclusion of the Other. In other words, mediation opens up the world to the sight of the 'other', enabling reflexivity on the

[1] For utilitarian versions of cosmopolitanism see e.g. Singer, 2002 and Unger 1996

part of the spectator who may start to think and talk about circumstances outside of his immediate environment and perhaps even act upon them. In this way, it is the interplay between the visibility of the other and reflexive action with respect to the other, which enables cosmopolitanism.

*"The cosmopolitan, as an ethic, embodies a commitment, indeed an obligation, to recognize not just the stranger as other but the other in oneself. Cosmopolitanism implies and requires, therefore, both reflexivity and toleration. In political terms it demands justice and liberty. In social terms, hospitality. And in media terms it requires.. an obligation to listen.. an obligation which .. is a version of hospitality" (*Silverstone 2007:14).

Silverstone too makes reference to Bauman's notion of the moral primacy of the face-to-face, but understands it as pointing towards a need to expand the demand of proximity rather than regressing to communitarianism or social action as acts of self-fulfillment.

"If the account of responsibility presumes the enabling primacy of the face-to-face, then the question becomes how we can effectively translate that obligation into a world in which distance is no longer a barrier and where the other, albeit through his or her mediation, is always within reach" (ibid: 151).

To understand how proximity can be extended beyond the local community, Silverstone – like Bauman himself – makes reference to Levinas' notion of the 'face'. Levinas uses the notion of the face to signify the precognitive relation to the Other, of being called by another and responding to that other. For Levinas, crucially, coming face to face with the Other is a non-symmetrical relationship. We are responsible for the Other without knowing that the Other will reciprocate. Thus, according to Levinas, we are subject to the Other without knowing the outcome. In this relationship, Levinas finds the meaning of being human and of being concerned with justice (Levinas 1969).

"to respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself. This cannot be an awakeness ... to my own life, and then an extrapolation to an understanding of another's precarious life. It has to be an understanding of the precariousness of the Other" (Butler 2004: 134).

The translation into a world in *'which distance is no longer a barrier'* and where the sense of the precariousness of the Other is such as to enable responsibility, requires what Silverstone calls Proper Distance. Proper distance refers to the importance of

understanding the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and understanding. Proper distance in mediation preserves the other through difference as well as through shared identity and is articulated discursively, when we are brought neither too close to the particularities or emotionalities of specific instances of suffering, nor too far to get a sense of common humanity as well as intrinsic difference. *"Proper distance involves both imagination, understanding and a duty of care: an epistemological and an ontological commitment to finding the space to express both what is experienced and essential in our relationships to the other"* (Silverstone 2007: 48).

While I do not construe of the concept of proper distance as one that is readily operationalized into an analytical category – or indeed should be thus operationalized – it is clear that criticisms of representations of suffering, as mentioned on page 17 above and discussed further in paper 4, obey a similar intuition. Representations of suffering which display in telescopic detail the devastation of human flesh, are 'too close' to the specific manifestation of suffering to preserve the shared identity of the other; Representations of the smiling faces of grateful children 'too far' to preserve that difference, which defines the identity of the other and enables, in Butler's words, an awakeness not to one's own life, but to 'the precariousness of the other'.

With this notion of proper distance as an idea and ideal to guide the analyses, my four articles in each their way address the question as to what kind of a relation between participants a given discursive practice enables and what the consequences of this particular configuration are for the kind of public that the discourse contributes to constructing – always with the implicit assumption that the ideal humanitarian public is a cosmopolitan one.

METHODOLOGY

The investigation into the role of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life, involves both an empirical line of enquiry and a theoretical one. The first line of inquiry involves the question as to what conception of social responsibility humanitarian organizations promote when taking on the role as mediators between Western publics and distant sufferers. It explores the consequences of the institutional

context of these organizations on the form of social responsibility that they are able to promote. It investigates historically what changes we can observe in these conceptualizations and to what extent can we understand them as resulting from institutional changes. This line of enquiry is essentially informed by the understanding of *Discourse as Practice*, as described in the section under that heading above. The second line of enquiry is theoretical. It is based on the assumption that the discourse of humanitarian organizations is at once a reflection of and a force in the configuration of dispositions in target publics. Enquiring about the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life, thus, means enquiring about the ways in which over the past 40 years, these organizations have given meaning to our relation to different sufferers and contributed to shaping our individual and collective conception of the scope and nature of our social responsibility. This line of enquiry is based on the understanding of *Discourse as Action* as described in the section under that heading above.

The investigation of *Discourse as Practice*, is an analysis of appeal texts as illocutionary acts. Any communication relies on conventions and regardless of the perlocutionary effect – the actual response of members of audience - we can observe texts as reflections of amalgamations of speaker intentions and expected responses on the basis of such conventions. In other words, any utterance is a reflection of communicative intentions on behalf of the speaker and the speaker's assumptions about his audience (how he may best succeed with his intention) and as such, conventions carve out a space of signification, or offer a meaning potential. This by no means implies that I am assuming a one-to-one relationship between signifier and signified. Conventions are not rules of correspondence, but fuzzy and dynamic categories and thus polysemy beyond the lexico-grammatical level exists because of two factors. First, because of the fuzzy boundaries of conventions, communication is characterized by under-specification. Any non-deictic utterance leaves some room for interpretation, but crucially, any utterance also delimits interpretation and this space of signification can be analyzed. Second, conventions themselves are highly context dependent. They are historically and socially situated. Thus any utterance is produced and received according to the conventions that structure a given genre (or genres) and a given social context. The polysemy that grows out of contradictory conventions is central to the theoretical framework drawn upon here and is addressed under the notions 'interdiscursivity' (see p. 19). Finally, it is beyond dispute that the reception of

texts by individual members of audiences is governed by their "contradictory idiosyncracies, their impulses, fears, sensitivities and prejudices" (Widdowson 1996) as well as by the particular circumstances of individual consumption. Indeed, recipients may ultimately respond to utterances in ways which have no support in the material properties of the text. Here we move beyond the concern with social conventions and into the realm of psychology where textual analysis is of little relevance. In order for the notion of polysemy to make sense, it must refer to conventions - polysemy is a property of text and can be analyzed as such. In other words, the analysis of discourse as social practice in this thesis, is an analysis of text as a reflection of speaker intentions, focusing on the space of signification delimited by the semiotic and social conventions of the discourse orders of which they are part.

The concern with *Discourse as Action* is tied to the understanding of discourse as dialectically related to the social. The overall interest of the thesis is in the performative dimension of humanitarian discourse, that is, how humanitarian communication may contribute to shaping dispositions towards distant suffering. Crucially, however, the thesis does not treat this as an empirical question. It is the theoretical framing of the project, an ontological preconception of the relationship between language, discourse and socio-cultural reality. It serves as an additional layer of interpretation of the analysis of Discourse as Practice, but the analysis itself is independent of it. In this conception of Discourse as Action, discourse is viewed as acts of identity and the 'public' is understood not as an empirical entity, but as 'a symbolic act of cultural identity' (Chouliaraki 2006: 12). Rather than pre-existing discourse, the public is constituted in discourse, as the set of subject positions embedded in it. This conception of the public does not entail an understanding of members of an audience as directly interpellated by texts that address them, but an understanding of texts as providing spaces of agency options for recipients, thus working as 'instruments of conditional freedom' (ibid).

In addressing the questions of Discourse as Practice and Discourse as Action, I follow the Dialectical-Relational approach (DRA) to CDA, which attends to the way social structures determine discourse, rather than the way individuals perceive discourse as in the cognitive-/socio-psychological approaches to discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell 1987, Wodak 2009, Van Dijk 2008). This does not mean, however, as I shall explain below, that individuals' role as agents in processes of discursive change is not acknowledged nor that DRA assumes a structural determinism in a Marxist or

Foucaultian sense. In theoretical terms, the difference between DRA and other CDA approaches with respect to the agency-structure question is one of degree. In analytical terms the difference is one of focus.

Within this overall theoretical framing, the analysis targets properties of text as traces of speaker intentions. The object of analysis is the meaning potential of words and utterances in the context of the discourse order(s) to which they belong. This form of analysis always involves a measure of interpretation, which will be influenced by subjective factors of the interpreter – in this case of the discourse analyst. As the purpose of the discourse analyst is to find traces of ideology, this agenda will necessarily influence the interpretation, just like this will be the case, I would argue, for any research agenda which tests a hypothesis against a set of data.

The most common place objection against Critical Discourse Analysis revolves around this issue as a question of bias. The near legendary *Language and Literature* debate between Henry Widdowson (1995, 1996) and Norman Fairclough (1996) is emblematic of this line of critique. Widdowson argues that for discourse analysis to be valid as analysis, it must map out the range of interpretations made possible by a piece of text. Instead, it is argued, Critical Discourse Analysis provides interpretations, "converging on a particular meaning having some sort of privileged validity", resulting from the ideological commitment of CDA (1995: 159). This line of critique, thus, centers on the allegation that CDA ignores alternative interpretations, construing texts as if they have unique interpretations. Against this criticism, however, I would argue that the analyses undertaken here by no means make claims to being the only possible interpretation. The epistemic interest of my project is in tracing variations and changes in the tenuous discursive formation of humanitarianism and interpretation involves offering possible ideological interpretations of these.

Theoretically, as Fairclough points out in his reply to Widdowson, diversity of interpretation is a central tenet of DRA, and it is no less central to the way his framework is employed here. The idea that subject positions may be ambiguously constructed due to conflicts between discourse orders (see p 21), is the aspect of Dialectical-Relational CDA which makes resistance possible and an indispensible notion for understanding discursive change. On the analytical level, it is true that DRA – and the analyses performed in this thesis – have no ambition to map out the full range of possible interpretations (nor is it clear how such an analysis should be

delimited), but pursues a particular question through the systematic employment of analytical categories. An analysis with a different set of questions would be interested in other aspects of the text and arrive at different interpretations. So, in the sense of being thus focused, CDA is 'biased'. I subscribe to Michael Toolan's view, that claims to impartiality are neither plausible nor necessary for CDA. In Toolan's words *"it is far preferable to concede that you cannot analyze or write about power, hegemony and dominance without yourself being implicated and compromised by the powerful and hegemonizing turns of your discourse. Claims to scientific objectivity are no less rhetorical than claims to be genuine critical… All such rhetorical claims have to be delivered upon, in no small measure by means of a supporting rhetoric of evidence, argumentation and argument"* (1997:87)

The second dominant line of critique of the bias of CDA concerns exactly this – the manner in which CD analysts support their claims. At the same time, this is the aspect of CDA which displays perhaps the greatest measure of diversity between its proponents. Where critics widely perceive CDA as macro-sociological claims based on textual analysis exclusively, in fact CDA covers a wide range of contextualizations and mediations between grand theory and micro-analysis, from large-scale historical and institutional analyses (eg. Reisigl and Wodak 2001, Wodak 2009) across ethnographic (eg. Scollon 2001), to socio-cognitive (eg. Van Dijk 2008, Wodak 2009) and socio-psychological mediations (Schrøder and Phillips 2007), which in various ways complement, corroborate or inform textual analysis. CDA shows similar diversity with respect to data collection procedures, ranging from vast amounts of textual data subjected to quantitative analysis (eg. van Dijk 1993, Mautner 2009) to detailed linguistic microanalysis based on select typical exemplars (eg. Fairclough 2003, Chouliaraki 2006). In this way, the extent and manner of support to be provided is a matter of some disagreement within CDA. Common to the approaches is, however, that no clear line separates data collection and analysis. CDA methods tend to be hermeneutic rather than analytical-deductive. After the first collection exercise, initial analyses are carried out in order to provide indicators for particular concepts, which are expanded into categories and on the basis of these results, further data are collected in a theoretical sampling process. In this way, CDA is considerably more data driven, than most conceptions would have it, but at the same time this process also implies that standards of falsification are not relevant for this type of research.

In order to support the claims of my analyses, I take three measures. First, I understand humanitarian discourse in an institutional context. Literatures which

describe the development and institutional dependencies of the humanitarian sector inform the textual analysis, just like the textual analysis contributes to an understanding of the institution itself. The fact that the analysis is thus anchored in and accountable to a subject field, with its own set of theories and methods, contributes towards a grounding of the analysis outside of the subjective perception of the analyst. Second, I include a historical perspective. This means that interpretations of current discourse are grounded in observable changes over time, rather than standing as decoupled postulates relying solely on a snapshot of a fluctuating social reality. Third, the detailed multimodal analysis of individual exemplar text is complemented with quantitative analyses of large (full population) data-sets. These quantitative analyses serve to identify dominant textual patterns and trends over time, which not only guide and corroborate the overall discourse analysis but crucially direct the ensuing sampling process. The identification of typical exemplars for discourse analysis is in many CDA studies, not least within DRA, an opaque process and this, in my view, is the most susceptible aspect of CDA's claim to scientific validity. The quantitative analyses of my thesis are an attempt to diminish this problem.

In sum, similarly to the Historical Discourse Analytical approach to CDA (Reisigl and Wodak 2001), I attempt to support my analyses with a form of triangulation, while at the same time respecting the fundamental premises of dialectical-relational CDA. While in the field of media studies, attempts at grounding discourse analysis are often based on some form of interview with text producers or recipients, I would argue that this is problematic, and certainly insufficient, when operating within a framework, which has naturalized discourse as its object of study. While clearly the introspection of the analyst as a method of analysis has its own set of problems as discussed above, the idea that the introspection of discourse participants can provide us with insight into the workings of power in discourse, would seem to me at odds with the understanding of ideology which much CDA theory, and certainly the one drawn upon here, involves. This is a Gramscian conception of ideology as naturalized and automated in common sense, "focusing on the *implicit* and *unconscious* materialization of ideologies in practices which contain them as implicit theoretical premises" (Gramsci 1971, quoted in Fairclough 1992:92 (Italics mine))

Drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's seminal work on 'Metaphors We Live By' (1980), Fairclough provides an illustrative example of naturalized discursive practices:

> *" some metaphors are so profoundly naturalized within a particular culture that people are not only quite unaware of them most of the time, but find it extremely difficult, even when attention is drawn to them, to escape from them in their discourse, thinking or action. Lakoff and Johnson discuss the metaphorical thinking of argument as war (reflected, for example, in 'your claims are indefensible', 'he attacked every weak point in my argument', 'his criticism was right on target' and 'I demolished his argument'). They point out that this is not just a superficial matter of wording: 'Many of the things we 'do' in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war' (1980:4). Thus the militarization of discourse is also a militarization of thought and social practice (Chilton 1988), just as the marketization of discourse [..] is also the marketization of thought and practice" (Fairclough 1992: 195)*

While discourse psychology can be and has been used in combination with CDA as a form of audience research which investigates the reproduction of discourses by text recipients (Schrøder & Phillips 2007), and thus to a lesser extent runs the risk of reproducing 'common sense', such methods, however, merely produce a new text to be analyzed using essentially the same procedures and susceptible to the same criticism as the type of CDA which is based on the primary text itself. At the same time, approaches to cultural analysis which rely on production or reception analysis, introduce an ahistoricity into the field, not only in the (banal but important) sense of restricting the temporal scope of analysis, but also, it could be argued, in the sense of disavowing the legacy of a long tradition of philology and hermeneutics.

To the extent that a method of inquiry could be developed, which would manage to evade the stereotypes and common sense of discourse as well as tap into not just the immediate communication effects, but the subtle, longer term adjustments in individuals, collectives and culture as a whole, this would most certainly be a highly worth-while endeavor. For the time being, I suggest that the diachronic examination of humanitarian text as cultural testimony, where we can observe subtle shifts that can reasonably be taken as indications of precisely such subtle socio-cultural effects, is a valid alternative.

METHOD

DATA

The thesis analyses appeal material from the Danish sections of three global humanitarian and human rights organizations: The Red Cross, Save the Children and Amnesty International. These are all well-known and well-reputed organizations with enormous budgets of which a substantial proportion goes to communication efforts. The three organizations all work in the name of humanity to better conditions for people in distress, and while they all have an operational strand which is local, their core activities are concerned with distant suffering. Save the Children (1919) and the Red Cross (1863) represent the traditional humanitarian organization, providing relief, and increasingly also (development) aid, in areas of devastation. Amnesty, as a human rights organization does not provide assistance, but works through advocacy and monitoring. Exploring these organizations together, under the common heading of 'humanitarianism' is motivated on the one hand by the fundamental condition they share: that of having to mobilize public concern for distant others in order to be able to exist and on the other hand, by the fundamental differences between them in terms of principles of neutrality versus practices of denunciation.

The material investigated from these organizations are mass-media texts that involve an appeal, ie. texts that give directions for action of some sort. The appeal dimension delimits the data because it is in the appeal that the donor, the central point of interest, is constructed. This means that other, highly influential humanitarian media and genres are excluded from inquiry such as press releases, reports, educational materials etc. Similarly, due to the interest in mass-media texts such media as direct mail, member's magazines, fundraising scrips etc. are not included. Finally, digital media texts have not been included due in part to the historical perspective of the thesis, in part to the greater consumer control of these as compared to traditional allocative media, which is likely to render mechanisms of persuasion and action essentially different (Uldam 2010, Uldam & Askanius 2011, Fenton 2008, Dahlgren & Olsson 2001). While a comparison between the humanitarian identities projected in traditional and digital media would be interesting and important, it is outside the scope of this project. The thesis investigates text from three allocative mass media: brochures, newspaper advertisements and TV-spots.

In collecting data for this project, a noteworthy finding was the lack of memory of the case organizations. Due to their limited administrative resources they do not have archives of past communication materials and substantial parts of the organizations' knowledge is lost due to the extensive use of volunteer work and short-term employments. For these reasons, data has been collected from external archives, The National Small-print Collection and The National Newspaper Collection of the Danish Royal Library as well as The Media Archives of the Danish State Library. Brochures were retrieved from the immense National Small-Print Collection, which by law includes every piece of printed material published in Denmark since 1697. The data set thus includes all brochures published by the three case organizations from 1970 – 2005, amounting to a total of 130 brochures. Newspaper ads were collected from the Danish daily newspaper Politiken, the national newspaper with the second largest readership, dominated by readers with a higher education, 50 percent of which are members of a humanitarian organization. Every fifth year was used as sampling point and every newspaper from these years was manually searched for humanitarian ads. The resulting dataset consists of 124 humanitarian ads. Finally, TV-spots were retrieved from the Media Archives of the Danish State Library which include approximately 120 humanitarian TV-spots that have been shown in commercial breaks from 1989 to today on the Danish TV2, the first broadcaster in Denmark with partial commercial funding, and currently the TV channel with most viewers. These, however, include no spots from Amnesty or Save the Children. The data set from the archives was supplemented with two spots from Amnesty International, retrieved from Danish Broadcasting Agency and from Amnesty's Danish secretariat. As the time span of the TV data was considered insufficient for a historical perspective, three recent spots, which exemplify current branding strategies were selected for detailed discourse analysis.

ANALYSIS

The interest of the thesis is in the performative dimension of discourse, that is, in how humanitarian discourse as articulated in the marketing materials of humanitarian organizations may creatively contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of dispositions of care for distant suffering. The thesis does not, however, concern itself with the ontological status of such concern per se, nor with the reality of transformations, but with the character of the performative potential of the text itself. To identify the mechanisms and semiotic devices behind the production,

reproduction or transformation of dispositions of care for distant suffering, the analysis focuses on the semiotic and semantic constitution of identities in the appeal material, investigating relations set up between the participants in the humanitarian exchange, their individual representations and the subject positions that the appeals produce. In the following, for simplicity's sake, I refer to these as 'humanitarian identities'.

Mediation, as we have seen above, posits a relationship of mutual constitution between practices of mediated communication and identity - an epistemological point upon which I ground my analysis of appeals as evidence of shifts in forms of public identities, of organizations as well as audiences. Following Chouliaraki's work on suffering in the news, I view the process of mediation as constituted by the semiotic categories of hypermediacy and immediacy (Chouliaraki 2006) and these categories fundamentally and implicitly inform my analytical approach. The concept of *'hypermediacy'* is concerned with suffering 'passing through the medium', as formulated by Tomlinson (see p. 22). The analysis of hypermediacy seeks to assess how technology participates in the social process of mediation and how, in so doing it shapes the encounter between donor and beneficiary. How do different media bring different genres together in particular appeals? How do the affordances of these media and the conventions of the genres bear upon the construction of humanitarian identities? The analysis of hypermedicay includes consideration of the institutional embedding of mediated communication and the consequences of factors such as political economy, conflicting interests and legitimacy issues for the configuration of the humanitarian appeal. In this way, the analysis of hypermediacy, addresses also the question of power struggles between adjacent discourse orders. The analytical concept of *immediacy* seeks to assess how appeals establish connectivity through specific emotional states and modes of action presented as natural and objective for the audience. The analysis of immediacy is the analysis of representations in terms of semantic content with a particular interest in constructions of affinity and agency as key devices in overcoming distance. The notion of *affinity* refers to the promotion of a sense of kinship, with a view to extending audiences' sense of responsibility to distant localities. The notion of *agency* refers to the promotion of a sense of efficacy on the part of the audience, the feeling that it is in their power to act upon the reality of suffering in such a way as to contribute to its transformation. Agency, in this way is instrumental to closing physical distance, but may also be vital to the acknowledgment

of responsibility and the acceptance of the sufferers' moral claim. The overarching concept of *Mediatization* situates these practices of mediated communication within the historical context of the contemporary, technologically-saturated environment, thereby allowing us to evaluate how organizational practices of communication and the identities they project are changing across time.

Grounded in critical discourse analysis and drawing on The Analytics of Mediation (Chouliaraki 2006), the analyses combine detailed syntagmatic linguistic analysis with a paradigmatic form of analysis which focuses on registrations of patterns of absences and presences. Contrary to the detailed linguistic analysis, the paradigmatic analysis lends itself readily for quantitative analysis and is used as such in the diachronic analyses of the thesis. In order to benefit fully from the large datasets, quantitative analyses are employed that both structure the data, periodize trends and motivate as well as corroborate the more detailed textual analysis of cases. The four articles that make out the core of this thesis variously employ these analytical strategies as they best serve to reveal discursive patterns in the particular medium, which they explore. Accounts for the particular analytical manifestations of the overall methodological approach can be found in each individual paper.

Paper 1, *Humanitarian Branding and the Media. The case of Amnesty International*, provides a detailed multimodal analysis of an artful TV spot released by the Danish section of Amnesty International in 2004. The analysis reveals an acute reflexivity on the part of the organization with respect to its communicative challenges. The spot presents a meta-appeal, which - in a similar spirit to the MSF ad above, but less explicitly so – thematizes problems of mediatization. It is organized around an axis of compassion fatigue, but by presenting a discourse which enacts a separation of action from representation, it insists that action is possible. In the process, however, the TV spot by means of subtle semiotic choices, constructs a subject position in which reasons for action are based on a desire to protect the subject's own social order. In this way, paper 1 sets the agenda for the ensuing papers.

Paper 2, *Identity and Appeal in the Humanitarian Brand,* much like paper 1, presents a multimodal analysis of two contemporary TV-spots, a 2001 spot from Amnesty International and a Red Cross spot from 2005. This paper focuses on the

consequences of the diffusion of corporate norms and values in the humanitarian sector, for the ideological positioning of the audience. It shows that by employing a branding strategy, which is advocated as a vehicle for an organization to be explicit about its identity, branding may in fact misalign image with identity and in so doing, advance a humanitarianism which is centered on cultural narcissism rather than a concern for the other, which accommodates difference.

Paper 3*, Mediatized Humanitarianism: Trust and Legitimacy in the Age of Suspicion,* presents a discourse analysis of 400 pages of humanitarian brochure material covering the period from 1970 to 2007. The paper reveals significant shifts in the legitimating discourses employed by humanitarian organizations during this period, from a performance based legitimacy, through legitimacy by institutionalization, to a compensation based legitimacy that dominates the 1990s and 2000s. This contemporary discourse reflects that trust in the organization has vanished as a component to humanitarian legitimacy, substituted by an exchange logic by which the organization's legitimacy derives from what it can offer the audience. This is by no means necessarily a discourse which is devoid of morality, on the contrary, it involves intense negotiation of moral agency.

Finally, paper 4: *Humanitarian Appeal and the Paradox of power,* examines the development of humanitarian advertising through analysis of 124 newspaper ads published in the period from 1970 to 2005. Using a discourse analytical approach which combines institution analysis with multimodal text analysis, it draws out the most marked changes that can be observed in the mode of appeal employed during this period. The paper exposes an increasing submission of humanitarian organizations to external demands, in terms of their choice of beneficiaries for public attention and in terms of the relations they set up between donors and beneficiaries.

CHALLENGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Humanitarian communication is a relatively unexplored subject and the primary contribution that this thesis strives to make, is to suggest a conceptualization of humanitarian communication as an emerging field of inquiry. Thus, although there are arguments and findings that may supplement perspectives and knowledge in adjacent fields, the central aim of the thesis is to find a way to understand humanitarian communication; in terms of developing an analytical apparatus for its exploration; in

terms of finding ways to use humanitarian communication as a social diagnostic as well as in terms providing means to enhance the reflexivity of humanitarian organizations with respect to their communicative practices.

The thesis argues that humanitarianism is in crisis. Across genres, developments in the humanitarian appeal are found to reflect the organizations' attempts to legitimate themselves in the face of doubts as to the feasibility of their mission and the ethical character of their benevolence, resulting ultimately in a back-grounding of the humanitarian cause. In order to avoid the conception of beneficiaries as pitiful and pathetic, a discourse of mutual benefit is constructed, a discourse which cannot produce the type of cosmopolitanism that has the non-reciprocal demand of the other at its core. It is suggested that the crisis of humanitarianism, which the thesis documents, offers an opportunity for humanitarian organizations to reflect on their priorities and activities and on how they may be able to re-conquer their professional ethos and moral authority. Thus, by offering a perspective on the legitimacy of humanitarian organizations as a function not exclusively of their relation to beneficiary publics, but also to donor publics, the thesis suggests that it may be futile for the areas of NGO management and marketing as well as for development studies to thus extend their scope of concern in order to understand the conditions of existence for humanitarian organizations today.

The thesis strives to provide an integrated understanding of the interrelationship between the humanitarian appeal as articulated in TV-spots, newspaper ads and brochures and the different affordances and institutional properties of these media genres. In demonstrating the effects of *hypermediacy*, the thesis contributes to an understanding of the ways in which communication is deeply affected by the institutions and technologies in which it is embedded. This is important not least because media technologies are rapidly evolving, proving not just new modes of communication, but likely also more profoundly changing conditions for *immediacy*.

The empirical studies of the thesis show that to understand the mediatization of humanitarian organizations, means not only to understand the ways in which these organizations are compelled to adapt to media standards, but also to understand how media are deeply implicated in the constitution, circulation and evolution of humanitarian identities and how these identities in turn influence media use. This leads

me to suggest that in order to identify what it means for social reality to be *mediatized,* it is necessary to see mediatization not merely as the isolatable and unidirectional effect of institutions obeying media logics, as in the common definition of this notion, but as a dialectic and dynamic process of mediation.

Many of the challenges and contributions of the thesis are related to its exploratory character. Acquiring the historical data has been no easy task due to the lack of memory infrastructure in NGOs. However, this also means that the set of materials collected for the thesis is unique and, I would argue, valuable as a testimony of cultural heritage in its own right. Developing an analytical framework for humanitarian communication has, however, been by far the dominant challenge of the thesis. As indicated in the brief discussion of related literatures above (p. 15-17), research in the subject field tends to discuss the moral philosophy of humanitarianism or, when concerned with communication, to be either consumer-psychological studies of donor-behavior or post-colonial studies of the ethics of representation. No prior research exists which systematically examines humanitarian appeal discourse. As a consequence of the lack of theoretical and analytical precedence, the analytical framework as well as the methods applied in the thesis, have been developed through a close examination of the data, similarly to a grounded theory approach, informed primarily but moderately by theories concerning the sociology of media.

In terms of method, it has been a central ambition of the project that the identification of historical trends be based on as complete a picture of the period as possible and that sampling for detailed textual analysis be based on as transparent and distinct criteria as possible. This ambition has driven the attempts to develop a quantitative approach for transforming the large amount of raw data into time trend analyses with as simple means as possible. The analytical categories used for this purpose have been developed through engagement with the data. In the examination of humanitarian brochures, I would contend that the approach developed succeeds in providing an overview of the genre and its development, endorsing the samples as typical exemplars with respect to the questions addressed. In the examination of news paper ads, the quantitative analysis again provides an overview of the genre and its developments, but subsequent sampling is not informed by this. As a modest measure for sanctioning the exemplars in these analyses as typical, ‘minimal pairs’ were chosen, where it can reasonably be argued that the one factor that distinguishes them is time. In principle, however, the examples chosen for detailed analysis could still be outliers and the

validity of this analysis rests more heavily on its association with analyses from other literatures. That said, in terms of method, the thesis seeks to contribute toward the important but difficult task of providing DRA with means for validating its typical exemplars.

The conceptualization of humanitarian appeal as symbolic relations between exchange participants, which I consider one of the most important theoretical contributions of the project, has similarly grown out of my engagement with the data. This conceptualization has informed the analytical framework, rendering the focus of analysis the representations of humanitarian actors with a particular emphasis on the subject positions offered for the potential donor. The focus on subject positions allows me to accentuate an under-recognized aspect of DRA and unfold the elements of this approach which hold, in my opinion, its greatest theoretical richness, namely those concerned with discourse as a mechanism in and of social change. In this conceptualization, the understanding of the humanitarian discourse order as destabilized due to struggles with adjacent discourse orders, involves also an understanding of the agency of the subject with respect to contributing to social change. When a discourse order is destabilized, interpellations are rendered ambiguous, leaving room for contestation. That the humanitarian discourse order has become thus destabilized and subject positions ambiguous, I hope to have shown below, and I consider this conceptualization of the crisis of humanitarianism a key point in the thesis. Whether indeed empirically this leads to contradictory discourses and contestation in humanitarian audiences, could be a question to be explored by CDA oriented audience researchers.

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Humanitarian Branding & the Media.

The Case of Amnesty International

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The development of corporate communication in recent years has brought about a fading of the division of labor between commercial and non-commercial organizations. While the practices of commercial organizations are becoming increasingly ethicalized, so the practices of non-profit organizations are becoming increasingly commercialized. This paper explores the use of media discourse for the communication of ethical messages by humanitarian organizations, caught, as they are, in a tension between, on the one hand, the commercial strategies of visibility and still greater dependence on the media, and, on the other hand, the public's skepticism toward mediated morality and what is commonly referred to as compassion fatigue. The issue is investigated through an analysis of a TV spot produced by the Danish section of Amnesty International in 2004. This spot is taken as an example of how the organization's branding strategies testify to a high degree of reflexivity about the conditions of what Luc Boltanski calls a Crisis of Pity. The analysis illustrates how, in the face of compassion fatigue, the organization manages to carve out a new space for itself in the marketized ethical discourse, and leads to a discussion of the consequences of such rebranding for the construction of morality by the organization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world has seen a vast proliferation of Non Governmental Organizations in the past few decades and these organizations play an increasingly important role in monitoring global governance and bringing principles and values to the attention of policy makers (Held & McGrew 2002; Keane 2003, Keck & Sikkink 1998, Sargeant, 1999, Foroohar 2005) The end of the cold war and the emergence of new communication technologies are commonly considered to have a tremendous impact on the growing importance of NGOs (Warketin, 2001; Risse, Ropp & Sikkink 1999;

Porta et al 1999). As the number of NGOs grows, their conditions of existence change and their managerial practices are pushed in new directions. Competition, neo-liberal political ideals, declining government support along side numerous scandals in the non-profit sector in the 1990s have led to a professionalisation and commercialisation in the sector (Martens 2006; Staggenborg 1997; Meyer & Tarrow 1988). One aspect of this commercialization of NGOs is the increased attention to marketing and the introduction of the concept of branding into the sector.

> *"Charities with a strong recognizable brand attract more voluntary donations than those without.[…] Increasingly, charity brand status is being used to communicate meaning through a unique set of values or associations that define the charity not only in terms of what it does (its cause) but more importantly in terms of the values it represents. Transforming charity into brands allows donors to identify more precisely what the charity does and the values it represents. This in turn allows donors to identify and select those charities whose values most closely match their own" (Hankinson, 2000:1).*

While the proponents of NGO branding consider branding an opportunity for the organization to be reflexive about its values and communicate these values more explicitly, one might see a contradiction between advertising's logic of recognition and the logic of education or awareness-raising which is a central objective for many humanitarian organizations and certainly for those whose purpose is not limited to emergency relief. While the social change, which is the ultimate goal of such an organization, may be aided by donations that allow the organization to go about its business, the arousal and maintenance of public social awareness is its fundamental prerequisite.

Increasingly, the vastness of misfortune and suffering to which the media expose us, is felt to have a domesticating and numbing effect, which leaves the spectator indifferent and causes what is commonly referred to as compassion fatigue (Tester 2001, Moeller 1999; di Giovanni 1994). Compassion fatigue and the public's perception of its social inefficacy compose a challenging dilemma for humanitarian organizations, which have previously used the depiction of suffering both to create legitimacy for the organization and its cause and to mobilize support from the public (Vestergaard 2008, Höijer 2004, Kinnick et al. 1996). It is the claim of this paper that

with the mediated representation of suffering intrinsically linked to social paralysis, humanitarian organizations must fashion a new strategy by which the media can be used in a morally compelling manner, which removes social action from the sphere of representation. Thus, not only must the humanitarian organization find new ways of mobilizing the public, in addition, the logic of the market forces the organization to rebrand itself to create a new kind of legitimacy, which is not compassion based. The paper explores how this need for rebranding is reflected in the promotional material of Amnesty International. It investigates how, in the face of compassion fatigue, the organization manages to carve out a new space for itself in the marketized ethical discourse and discusses the consequences of this rebranding for the construction of morality by the organization. The paper shows that in a recent branding spot from AI, suffering is entirely removed from representation and substituted with a focus on action and agency on the part of the benefactors. In the absence of explicit ideological or political stance, the affective mode of the spot becomes decisive for the establishment of the rationale behind the appeal. In the spot, compassion which is traditionally used in humanitarian appeals is replaced by the affective mode of fear – a force of appeal, which introduces a whole new set of problems.

After a brief outline of the Analytics of Mediation, which serves as the paper's methodological frame, the paper provides a detailed multimodal analysis of a TV spot produced by the Danish section of Amnesty International. The analysis is followed by a discussion of issues raised by the spot, namely the problem of representation, the problem of action and the spot's construction of morality connected with the introduction of fear as emotional drive behind humanitarian appeal.

2. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL & THE ANALYTICS OF MEDIATION

Amnesty International (AI) is one of the largest, most established global humanitarian organizations with almost 50 years of existence and national subsections in 150 countries. Contrary to aid organizations, whose communication with the public is primarily concerned with raising funds for disaster relief and whose practices are typically based on a principle of impartiality, the purpose of Amnesty International is the protection of human rights, that is, social change, and as a consequence education and awareness raising are crucial components of their

practice. Presumably, it is this aspect of AI which causes it to be an organization with an extraordinarily strong grass root tradition and a current global community of 1.8 million members (75,000 in Denmark). AI exercises its power by pressurizing state authorities through international, public exposure and in this sense it is essentially a political, denunciation-oriented organization, and not strictly speaking an impartial one. These characteristics taken together make more exacting the challenges of adaptation to market demands that an organization like AI faces, and recent years have seen a still growing body of literature on the organization (e.g. Buchanan 2004 & 2002, Clark 2001, Power 2001). Most notably, the remarkable study by Stephen Hopgood, based on a full years' field work inside Amnesty's International Secretariat, describes a fierce internal conflict between conservative and progressive forces in the organization, a conflict between moral and political authority as well as a conflict between more traditional activists and modernizers "for whom intensified competition about Amnesty's future in a globalized world means making the most of its most lucrative commodity, its reputation, as a brand" (Hopgood 2006: 20).

This internal conflict, in strategy as well as morality, has important consequences for the publics that are addressed by the organization, not only in terms of which strategy dominates but also in terms of how this strategy is managed. The nature of humanitarian organizations' branding strategies may have crucial implications for the construction of humanitarianism and, more generally, morality in the public sphere. In The Spectatorship of Suffering, Chouliaraki (2006) provides an analytical framework for the investigation of the construction and legitimation of ethical norms by the media, concerned in particular with the way the semiotic resources of media reports on distant suffering shape the public's relations and dispositions vis-à-vis distant sufferers. The analytics of mediation is a framework for studying television as a mechanism of representation that construes human suffering within specific semantic fields where emotions and dispositions for action are made possible for the spectator. It takes its point of departure in the ethical norms embedded in reports on suffering and seeks to problematize the meaning-making procedures through which these norms acquire systematicity and legitimacy in and through television.

> *"The assumption behind the 'analytics of mediation' is that choices over how suffering is portrayed, where, when and with whom the suffering is shown to occur always entail specific ethical dispositions, independently of our own evaluative judgment on these dispositions as*

undesirable or desirable. The value of the 'analytics of mediation', in this respect, lies in its capacity to re-describe the semiotic constitution of suffering and, in so doing, to explicate the moral implications and political agendas that inform this constitution" (Chouliaraki, 2005: 148).

It is a crucial aspect of Chouliaraki's Analytics of Mediation that it encompasses both the semiotics of the text, by looking into the multi-modality of media texts, and the power relations that constitute its social context, by looking at the constructions of the scene of suffering and the connectivities between sufferer and spectator in the texts. This dual focus implies that we cannot study the relations between the social entities, implicitly or explicitly involved in the text (what she calls 'difference outside the semiotic') unless we pay attention to the multimodality of mediation, which accommodates consideration of the impact of technological factors on media semiosis ('difference within the semiotic').

In the analysis under the section 'Branding Amnesty International: "See what you can do"', I have adapted this integrated perspective on mediated suffering, on the one hand, and the conception of media semiosis, on the other, in order to frame the analysis of a branding spot from AI. I broadly refer to the three categories of multi-modal analysis in the 'Analytics': mode of presentation; verbal-visual correspondence and aesthetic effect, but I place particular emphasis on the verbal-visual correspondence because this is the semiotic category that best throws into relief the characteristics and possible effects of the AI spot. Below, the spot's verbal and visual narratives are described and analyzed in turn with a view to showing that it is in the disparity between the two that the essential meaning-making takes place. Subsequently, I discuss the social constructions of the text in the sections 'The Problem of Action: Beyond compassion fatigue' and 'The Problem of Representation: The strategy of the 'meta-appeal'.

3. BRANDING AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: "SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO"

In 2004, the Danish section of AI released a TV-spot, which was shown in the Danish cinemas and on a number of TV-channels. Under the heading 'See what you can do', the spot was connected to a web campaign; with a website which listed actions the recipient could take in support of human rights. Contrary to much of the promotional material from AI, this branding campaign was a national production

developed in collaboration with an advertising agency. The branding spot promotes AI independently of specific initiatives and campaigns and does not call for any specific action from its audience. Rather than using a traditional documentary appeal, where people in need are exemplified and the audience is urged to make a donation, this spot is composed as a collage of fictional moving images drawing on a blend of the genres of advertising, news and horror film, tied together by a voiceover in the style of reporter commentary. The spot is 45 seconds long and includes 9 short scenes each accompanied by a short statement about AI.

3.1. THE VERBAL

The verbal is provided by a male voice in an objective presenter-style. It consists of 9 statements, in the form of short, syntactically simple and homogenous declarative clauses describing in general terms the activities and accomplishments of Amnesty.

Scene 1: De ser på verden med andre øjne
They look upon the world with different eyes

Scene 2: De forhindrer våben i at falde i de forkerte hænder
They prevent weapons from falling into the wrong hands

Scene 3: De skaber tryghed
They create security

Scene 4: De giver en stemme til de tavse
They provide a voice for the silent

Scene 5: Og sørger for at de rette hører det
And make sure the right people hear it

Scene 6: De finder dem, der er forsvundet
They find those that have disappeared

Scene 7: De sætter de uskyldige fri
They release the innocent

Scene 8: De stopper tortur og dødsstraf
They put a stop to torture and death penalty

Scene 9: De beskytter menneskerettighederne
They protect human rights

3.1.1. VERBAL ANALYSIS

The verbal refers to each item on AI's agenda, but not in terms of *fighting for* the release of political prisoners and *advocating* for weapon control, *lobbying* for human

rights, *monitoring* the governments' behavior and *pressurizing* them through public exposure which would arguably be the more accurate depiction of AI's modus operandi. Instead, it makes use of predicates that entail success through their lexically encoded endpoints: *prevent*, *provide*, *stop*. Each verb phrase is constructed with a verb that is lexically telic and as such denotes accomplishment. But the telic verbs are combined with indefinite or generic objects, rendering the predicates activity types. This way, each statement comes to describe an ongoing accomplishment. In addition, all verbs are in the simple present tense denoting the timelessness of the activities. The statements refer to both past, present and future. As a result, the text not only creates an image of solidity, consistency and reliability, it also attaches a high degree of agency to the organization in spite of the fact that the predicates are somewhat abstract and vague.

The verbal statements are organized around a set of themes that serve as the objects of external action exclusively. For these themes, *the innocent, the silent, those who have disappeared*, the use of generic noun phrases with definite pronouns, not only presupposes the existence of this group but also implies that we can identify this group, while avoiding to actually mark it out. In fact, all of the political content of Amnesty's activities could be argued to be located within these implications.

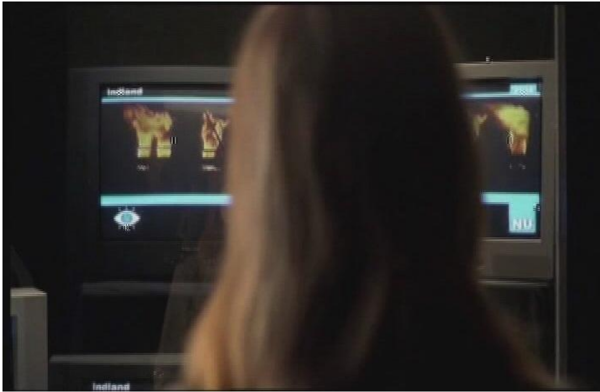
In all utterances the agent is 3rd person plural *'they'*, referring to, not the organization, but to the people affiliated with the organization, to a collective that takes action. By using the speaker-exclusive pronoun *'they'* rather than a speaker-inclusive *'we',* that is, rather than have the narrator represent the organization itself, the statements are leant an objective voice. The presenter style and its objective voice is vital in removing the spot from the genre of appeal and at the same time serves as safeguard against questions or critique as to the legitimacy of subjective motives for involvement in AI's activities. In addition, the 3rd person use has the crucial effect, contrary perhaps to immediate expectation, of not excluding the addressees as would have been the case, had the agents been referred to as '*we'*. Crucially, '*we'* would have the effect of creating a disparity between the AI representatives that act and the audience which does not, whereas '*they'* is only exclusive with respect to the speaker. Rather, then, than presenting a moralizing '*we*', which is contrasted with the addressees, the spot reserves a possibility of inclusion and a potential for agency for the audience.

In sum, the verbal of the spot is not preoccupied with sufferers or persecutors, it does not aim for socio-political criticism, nor does it attempt to illustrate or legitimate the ideological foundation of the organization or the morality that underpins it. Instead, the thematic of the spot is limited to a concern with agency and action exclusively.

3.2. THE VISUAL

The visual side of the TV-spot consists of 9 scenes corresponding to the 9 statements in the voice over. It is set in a western city, the characters young, white middleclass. Contrary to the verbal, the visual is presented with low modality. It makes use of the aesthetics of the advertising genre, with pleasing imagery detached from natural realism by having little articulation of detail and background and unmodulated, relatively undifferentiated colors, predominantly dark blues and blacks interrupted by sharp contrast of white and golden. Most of the scenes are unconnected in terms of visual narrative, but tied together through the audio-effects, which carry over from each scene into the next. The audio is composed around a theme of mechanical whiz and clatter connected with the action of the scenes and in addition a background of disharmonic electronic hiss that intensifies in the course of the spot.

The first scene has three frames, the first of which shows a set of buildings on fire, large, flickering yellow and orange flames filling the screen, black silhouettes of buildings within them. The camera subsequently zooms out and shows the back of a head with long red hair, in front of a shop window which displays two TV sets both showing the image of fire with a bright blue header and footer framing it as a news broadcast. In the third frame the perspective has shifted to give a slightly diagonal frontal of a handsome, serene-looking girl in her mid-twenties looking at these TV screens. She is the only part of the image, which is in sharp focus, while there is a blur of lights and people moving behind her. The first frame is accompanied by a loud hiss corresponding to that of a powerful fire and this hiss spills into the second and third frames where it is mixed with footsteps and gradually transformed to the sound of a cityscape.



Picture 1: Scene 1 - They look upon the world with different eyes.

The transition to the second scene is created auditorily, through the metallic click of a gun. The camera now behind the girl, it shows her as she, eyes wide open, slowly turns her head to look behind her and the camera dwells on her as she looks motionless into the blurry darkness.

Picture 2: Scene 2 - They prevent weapons from falling into the wrong hands

The next scene shows the torso of a woman as she closes her apartment door and secures it with a chain. As she closes the door, it gives a hollow, metallic slam, which seems to echo in the stairway and more resembles that of a heavy metal door in a prison than the sound of the wooden up-class door as depicted. The following frame shows her from behind, walking away from the door. We hear her footsteps as she walks away and this sound is joined by an unnerving high pitch noise like microphone back-feeding.

Picture 3: Scene 3 - They create security

The sound of microphone back-feeding serves as transition into the next scene. The first frame shows a full figure, frog's perspective of a man speaking into a megaphone. His voice is not heard, still just the sound of microphone back-feeding. He slowly lowers the megaphone and the camera pans out to gradually reveal his surroundings: He is in a big, dark, empty stadium, talking towards endless rows of empty brightly colored seats. The sound of microphone back-feeding is replaced by the, again hollow and metallic, sound of a phone ringing, which serves as transition to the next scene.

Picture 4: Scene 4 – They provide a voice for the silent

The ringing of the telephone continues as we see four severe, middle-aged men in dark suits at what appears to be a press-conference, an audience in front of them, camera flashes flickering. One of these men picks up his cell phone and we hear his repeated 'hallo', answered merely by a loud dial tone, which is subsequently joined by a sharp squeaky sound both of which are carried over to the next scene.

Picture 5: Scene 5 - And make sure the right people hear it

The next scene shows the door of a dark phone booth slowly closing, while the telephone hanger inside the booth swings slowly back and forth. The squeaky sound which complements the closing door is transformed into a more sonorous but disharmonic sound like that of a horror film sound track.

Picture 6: Scene 6 - They find those who have disappeared.

The horror film sounds intensify and we see a young man, uniformed in dark blue like a private watch guard, walking up a dark corridor and, at the bottom of the corridor, entering a code on an alarm on the wall.

Picture 7: Scene 7 - They release the innocent

The watch guard turns a corner into a new dark corridor with a single beam of light flowing out of a single open side door. He walks up to this door and closes it and there is a great slam, the screen turns black, the horror sounds seize and we hear the footsteps of the guard walking away.

Picture 8: Scene 9: They protect human rights

The black screen from the previous scene is replaced by the Amnesty logo on a black background. The large white candle flickers to the sound of yet another heavy door that shuts and the bolded text appears next to it: *See what you can do*, which shortly after is replaced by the URL for the campaign's website.

3.2.1. VISUAL ANALYSIS

The visual is characterized by small shots and derives a somewhat mysterious ambiance from cutting off the surrounds and yet pointing to something that goes on off-screen and letting the camera slide slowly across each scene. This mysteriousness develops into a threatening and eerie mood due to the unsettling audio effects. In the visual there is no 'they', no collective. Each scene has one agent in it and there is no indication that either of these subjects is interacting with anyone. As spectators, we are also not invited to engage with the agents. They are viewed from a frog's perspective, always glancing away from the camera, distant and impenetrable. The compositional properties of the visual give an impression of passivity that corresponds to the a-physical or introvert actions of these individuals. Each but the

first image is characterized by static movement and harmony, with symmetry, exclusively simple, straight lines, central vanishing points, a limited color spectrum and a relatively steady camera. To the extent that the agents act, this action is always directed towards a, predominantly electronic, medium. The significance of these electronic media in the spot is accentuated by the non-human, metallic theme in the audio throughout the spot. Three activities are undertaken, corresponding to three discourses in relation to the conditions of mediation: The discourses of observation (scenes 1 & 2), communication (scenes 4, 5 & 6) and exclusion (scenes 3, 7 & 8).

3.2.1.1. OBSERVATION

The two observation scenes comment on the condition of mediated misfortune that it may render a spectator out of the witness rather than connect and engage him with the sufferer. First, the scene does not show suffering or people in need. Rather, it shows a material symbol and metonymic expression of misfortune and then points to the fact that this is not part of our on own physical reality, but something we witness through the media as unconnected, individual spectators. Second, the effect of the gradual revelation of the additional layers between us as viewers of the spot and the scene of misfortune in the image of the burning buildings is to point to the manipulations that the media expose us to when they create the illusion of immediacy. While the media create the impression that they bring the misfortune of distant others into our reality, mediation, in fact, inevitably involves these layers of interpretation, perspective and invested interest. As audience to the spot, we are brought to realize that not only are we watching the fire as mediated by TV, we are, in fact, watching misfortune hyper-commodified, displayed in a shop window, as a comment on the fact that suffering is a commodity sold by media agencies, but, crucially, also by humanitarian organizations as AI themselves. The second observation scene takes the metonymic expression of misfortune, this time in the form of a gun shot, out of the world of mediation and into the girl's physical environment. The crucial distinction between the mediated and unmediated world is that we can only immediately act in the latter, but, crucially, when the misfortune is brought inside the scope of the girl's ability to act, she still does not. She merely turns her head as if to check whether she herself is at risk, thus transforming the potential misfortune into a potential threat, while at the same time transferring her spectator identity to the unmediated world.

3.2.1.2. COMMUNICATION

There are three communication scenes: Those of the stadium (4), the press conference (5), and the phone booth (6). They all address the problem of the anonymity of mediated communication. In the first scene, the man who initially appears to be addressing a crowd turns out to not have an audience. As such, the scene points to the difficulty of getting the public's attention for humanitarian messages, but, also, by symbolic extension, to the problem of the anonymity of the audience in mediated communication. It is impossible to predict whether you have an audience, what the constitution of this audience is and, crucially, what response is achieved. For humanitarian organizations, specifically, the problem of anonymity applies also to the relationship between members of the audience. Not knowing who else receives the mediated message displaces responsibility since it is not known with whom it is shared and whether or not other members of the audience may be more qualified or otherwise more liable to act in response to the message. Further, the anonymity issue is commented on from the recipient perspective. In mediated communication we cannot know the identity of the addresser, as pointed out in the empty telephone booth scene, and so we also cannot know the intentions, motivations and desires behind the address. The press conference scene ties together these problems of communication into a full circle of representation. As recipient of the message, the man's realm of action is that of re-representation.

Each of these communication scenes shows failed communication. In fact, no message is ever transferred. In each scene, all we hear is the sound of the technology itself. The back-feeding sound associated with the megaphone and the busy signal of the telephone. This reference to McLuhan's classic phrase 'the medium is the message' suggests that not only does the technology influence the nature of communication, it amputates the communicator to the extent where the awareness of the problems of mediation, both on the part of sender and recipient, is such that the message is emptied of all reliable content.

3.2.1.3. EXCLUSION

The two remaining scenes both show doors being locked (7 & 8), in a home and in an institution. This points to a depiction of security as something that is achieved through exclusion and implies that the outside world is viewed as a threat that one must protect oneself against, as an individual and as a community, rather than act

upon. It takes the threat of the outside world from a distant reality directly to our doorstep, much like the media bring distant misfortune directly into our living rooms, but rather than creating association between these two realities and the individuals that inhabit them, this proximity causes an increased need for protection through exclusion.

To summarize, the visual side of the spot seems to reflect upon the problem of mediation in the context of humanitarian appeal. It portrays the passive spectators it produces, in the theme of observation, the authenticity questions it raises, in the theme of communication, and, in the theme of exclusion, the 'othering' effect it may have upon the distant sufferer. These visual themes together form one distinct discourse, which is adjunct to that of the verbal, but it is in the junction, or, rather, in the disparity, between the two semiotic codes that the essential meaning-making takes place.

3.3. VERBAL VISUAL CORRESPONDENCE

As audience to the TV-spot, our spontaneous reaction is to interpret the visual montage as illustrations of the verbal statements. All scenes have a degree of thematic correspondence between verbal and visual and so, as audience, we are naturally inclined to try to create coherence. Thus, initially the 'they' of the verbal is interpreted as congruent with the agents of the visual. However, throughout the spot the relationship between verbal and visual is puzzling because, in spite of the thematic consistency, there seems to be a qualitative discrepancy. The condensed action of the verbal statements contrasts the passivity of the visual. When the connection between the agents in the visual and the verbal is lost it becomes clear that the agent in the visual refers not to Amnesty International ('they' in the voiceover) but to us, the western spectators and potential benefactors. It comments on the relation between us, the humanitarian organizations that try to address us, and peripherally, the unfortunates that are the topic of this relation. The spot, however, goes beyond just commenting on the problematic of mediation when, through the interplay between the visual, verbal and audio mode, it engages us in actively solving a puzzle of coherence that gives us an almost physical experience of the manipulative force of the media; our readiness to go along with implied connections.

The contrast created between the verbal and the visual corresponds to a separation of action from representation. The verbal presents a simple and straight discourse of social action and achievement. The visual, on the other hand, presents an intricate reflection on problems inherent to mass communication: The indeterminacy of the composition and dispositions of the audience from the point of view of the addresser, the passivity and seclusion attached to the spectator role, the imposed perspective in mediation, the opaqueness of motivations behind the mediated address and the impossibility to act at a distance which leads to a closing off of the reality of the unfortunates.

Verbal: **ACTION** Activeness & effectiveness of AI ➢ Agency of benefactor Invitation to act ➢ Agency of audience
Visual: **REPRESENTATION** Observation discourse ➢ Passivity & individuality ➢ Commodification of suffering Communication discourse ➢ Anonymity of recipient and indeterminacy of attention ➢ Anonymity of addresser and indeterminacy of intention Exclusion discourse ➢ Othering effect of mediation

By thematizing the problem of mediation, the spot sides, so to speak, with the public that suffers the frustration of relying on mass communication and the spot achieves recognizability and identification by echoing and reproducing this skepticism. At the same time, however, by playing out the separation of action from representation, the spot insists that it is indeed possible to act. AI, somewhat paradoxically, place themselves outside of the circle of representation by declaring that they act and that their action is effective, singling out specifically (albeit abstractly) what their aims are. There are no ifs and buts. Their mission is as simple and straightforward as their syntax.

4. THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION: THE STRATEGY OF THE 'META-APPEAL'

Yves Daccord, Director of Communication for the International Committee to the Red Cross, describes the communicative conditions of humanitarian organizations as fundamentally changed due to advances in communication technology and increased interaction between global and local levels.

> *"The need to try to understand, to decode, to make sense of that information is greater than ever, all the more so because its sheer quantity and omnipresence cannot explain a world that is generally perceived as being more complex, more dangerous and beset by increasingly acute differences of identity […] The growing volume of information facilitated by the new communication technologies paradoxically renders communication more difficult and is tending to deepen the distrust of various audiences" (Daccord, 2001: 698)*

In a very similar vein, Luc Boltanski in his book "Distant suffering. Morality, Media and Politics" (1999), points to distrust resulting from a skepticism of representation. He diagnoses contemporary culture with what he calls a Crisis of Pity. His argument is based on the observation that for it to be morally acceptable to witness suffering through the media, the emotion it evokes must be separated from the fictional. He points out that since only action can separate the real from the fictional, in order to be moral, the spectator must be oriented toward action, towards what he calls effective speech. The Crisis of Pity, he says, is a crisis of effective speech, a skepticism of representation, which to a great extent is media induced.

> *"The media situation, by not only distancing the spectator from the unfortunate but also from the person who presents the unfortunate's suffering to him (without himself having necessarily experienced them) makes more exacting the necessary conditions of trust which, as many experimental studies have shown, are broadly dependent upon an effect of presence. The media situation thereby increases the uncertainty inherent to communication which, when it is a question of communicating misfortune, is made fragile by the existence of a number of conflicting ways to be affected when faced with suffering"* (1999: 151)

The skepticism of representation essentially pertains to the truth, authenticity and appropriateness of communication. When witnessing suffering through the media,

we are aware that out of the vast amounts of sufferers in the world, only a fraction can be picked out for representation and even fewer for action. The mere problem of the selection of unfortunates to be represented brings into question the possibility of true universalism (what Boltanski refers to as *conflict of beliefs*). Further, uncertainty grows out of the concern that the roles of unfortunate, persecutor and benefactor can never be impartially assigned (what Boltanski refers to as *avoidance of reference).* From these underlying reservations grows the public's suspicion as to the authenticity of altruistic and disinterested desires to help (Boltanski's *opacity of desire*) and doubts as to the possibility to act on reality and actually transform it (Boltanski's *vanity of intentions*). According to Boltanski, "these uncertainties, which have become platitudes, now serve to bolster, if not the renewal, at least the reinforcement of anti-humanitarian arguments" (ibid). The uncertainties relieve the anxiety, loss of self-esteem and sense of indignity often said to be provoked by witnessing suffering without being able to alleviate it, because criticism of representation can suspend the indignation to the benefit of doubt. In this manner, Boltanski can be understood as placing the source of compassion fatigue not in the moral constitution of the public as such, but in the nature of representation. This interpretation has the crucial implication of preserving a space of possibility for humanitarian action. With its focus on action and agency, contrasted with representation, the AI spot seems to reflect a similar understanding of the organization's conditions of existence and appears to not only tap into this space of possibility but to quite explicitly mark out its boundaries.

Constructing a branding spot in the form of a meta-appeal, a communication about the circumstances or conditions of humanitarian appeal, makes it possible for the spot to entirely escape the problems associated with representations of suffering. The audience is not confronted with spectacles of suffering that lay a moral demand on their witnesses, nor is suffering presented on a scene of entertainment and seduction. The spot steers clear of the traditional pity figures and eludes the affective mode typically educed to strengthen the persuasive force of a humanitarian appeal; compassion, and its first descendent, guilt. This maneuver not only brings the spot out of reach of compassion fatigue, but also rejects the sentimentalism and accusations of self-absorption attached to compassion. As we have already seen, the spot evades all of Boltanski's uncertainties and by suppressing the ideology, which

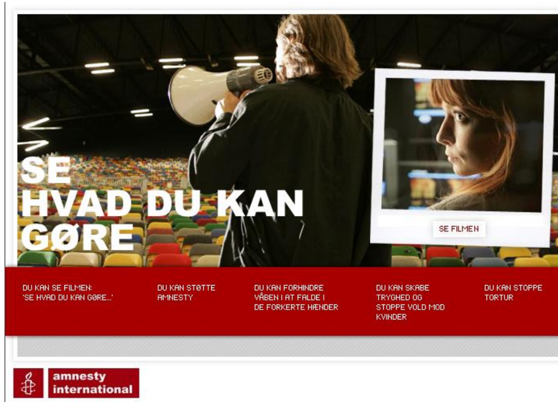
forms the system, on the basis of which the roles of victim, persecutor and benefactor are cast, the spot remains ahistorical and apolitical.

5. THE PROBLEM OF ACTION: BEYOND COMPASSION FATIGUE

The insistence upon the agency of the individual is essential for an organization such as AI. As described above, action may be viewed as the only means by which the suffering of distant others can be removed from the realm of the fictional and as the sole possibility for circumventing compassion fatigue. As a response to humanitarian appeal, according to Boltanski, the witness has two options for action, paying and speaking. While financial support is clearly necessary for the survival and functioning of humanitarian organizations, from the point of view of the donor, it is a problematic response to suffering. A symbolic exchange of money will in most cases make a very limited difference in the reality of the donor (who these days will I fact not need to physically pull the money out of his purse, but instead signs up for a barely noticeable automatic monthly transferal from his bank account) and so the action can be argued to be on the edge of the real (e.g. Baudrillard, 1988). Thus, for the spectator to be offered no other option in response to suffering than paying, could be argued to impede his moral response. The alternative action, speech, has the advantage of constituting public action and, thus, carrying political potential. For speech to be a valid alternative to paying, however, it must be effective speech - that is, speech that is oriented toward action with the intention to alleviate misfortune. It must be embodied, involve the sacrifice of other actions, and testify to a commitment. This view of action is recognizable in the AI spot's invitation for action beyond donation and its attempts to get the audience to draw the cause of the organization out of the sphere of representation and into the life world of the public. This is best exemplified in the clash between the verbal and the visual as already discussed and in the offer that the spot makes to its audience. The title of the film and its concluding line,

See
what you can
do

which is printed across the screen, plays on the same contrast between seeing and doing, between representation and action. If the audience chooses to follow the invitation to the website, the URL of which is printed on the screen, they are offered the possibility to step out of the spectator role and act.



Picture 10: website – see what you can do

The invitation to act does not take the form of a request or appeal, but precisely of an invitation. The desire in the audience to support AIs cause is taken for granted, and it is assumed that as long as the public is aware of the possibility and means for action, they will indeed act. In this sense, the spot interpellates the audience as humanitarians. The options for action are not presented in the spot itself. The spot refers to Amnesty's website and so it is up to the individual to decide whether or not to visit the site and make this investment of effort within the space of their own reality. By using the interactive affordances of this medium, AI do not push themselves upon the audience, cry for help or even indicate that they need support. What essentially is an appeal, of course, is presented as an offer. There is no shame, guilt or bad conscience involved. On the website a set of options is presented under the heading 'See what you can do', again with all actions encoded telically, stressing achievement, and rather than using deontic modality, includes the modal 'can', stressing ability and possibility on the part of the audience.

You can watch the film 'See what you can do'
You can support Amnesty
You can create security and stop violence against women
You can stop weapons from falling into the wrong hands
You can stop torture.

Each of the listed options is a link to a page describing what form of help is offered – all conventional actions as making a donation, volunteering, writing letters to governments (the recipients are named and letters drafted, so one only needs to sign and mail the letter) and signing petitions. Interestingly, however, the concept of signature has developed a new variant. For one campaign, we are offered the option to give our hand-print, for another to provide a photo of ourselves. As well as indicating that the signature is worn out as signifier, they are also invitations to make a manifestation, which is to a greater extent embodied, using our bodies not only to as a medium for communication but as communication itself, as the sign itself. Thus, when the audience is invited to write protest letters or provide photos and handprints, this may be done not only as grass root action with the direct aim of preventing the human rights violations, that are the issue of the protest, but also, and perhaps even more so, with the aim of offering the public an opportunity to respond morally, in Boltanski's sense, to their knowledge of suffering and thus provide them with the means to defy compassion fatigue.

6. THE PROBLEM OF REBRANDING HUMANITARIANISM: FEAR AND MORALITY

The setting of the spot is the privileged, western world, the spectators' neighborhood. Thus, the spot does not ask us to identify with or feel a sense of responsibility for circumstances outside of our own life world. At the same time, although to a certain extent the spot can be said to work in an intellectual mode, it is far from devoid of emotion. As mentioned above, the visual carries an eerie mysteriousness derived from the darkness, from a general sensation of absence, from an invisible threat that seems to be lurking just off screen. This is complemented by the disturbing horror-film audio effects, to produce an overall ill-omened, apprehensive mood. In this manner, the affective mode of the spot is, in fact, fear and it is fear that lends its sense of urgency to the spot. This in and of itself is problematic because fear is by definition self-concerned. Further, the Western setting and the mood combined raise questions as to which type of moral disposition is, indeed, aimed at. It seems clear that there is an intention behind the spot to present the protection of human rights as something relevant outside of the underprivileged communities with which we are accustomed to associate humanitarian action, driven perhaps by a motivation not to cultivate a division between us and 'the others'. But there is a problematic ambiguity or under-specification in the spot with respect to the

basis of the relevance of human rights protection in privileged democratic countries, where they are, after all, relatively rarely violated. The immediate interpretation may understand this by simple reference to the universality of these rights, but the affective mode of the spot introduces an allusion to human rights being under threat in western societies. While the threat alluded to could be interpreted as the threat of the Crisis of Pity, crucially, the spot does not preclude the interpretation that the importance of the protection of human rights derives from *our* human rights, as we enjoy them in the democratic world, being threatened by outside forces. In this interpretation, the protection of human rights, even if it aims at the global scale, is motivated by a desire to protect the structure of our own social order. In this manner, the spot lends itself to, and perhaps even invites, a consequentialist or utilitarian derived sense of human rights, which is based on utility and could be argued to stand in sharp contrast to the moral rights ethics, which is the ideological foundation of Amnesty International.

The ambiguity may reasonably give rise to a concern that what is felt mirrored in the spot is, in effect, the fear that has captured the western public due to recent years' focus on terror, and that the reproduction of this fear is vital in lending the spot emotional appeal. This would mean not only that AI may gain support under false pretences, but also, and most importantly, the spot may simultaneously legitimate such a utilitarian morality through the ethos of Amnesty International. This problem adds another dimension to the avoidance of compassion strategy for humanitarian organizations. While it may be fair to argue that a generalized concern for the other must be produced through some measure of emotional identification (Bellah et al. 1985; MacIntyre 1985), by removing the suffering other from the scene of representation and replacing it with an 'it could happen to you' discourse, the organizations may fall into the trap of articulating humanitarianism in a discourse of egocentricity. When self-concern becomes vehicular for the promotion of human rights, this happens at the risk of widening the gap between us and the other, potentially cultivating the perception of the other as a threat to western civilization and legitimating cultural antagonism.

7. CONCLUSION

Humanitarian organizations are caught in the dilemma that the development of media discourse on suffering has to some extent undermined the public's sense of

social purpose but humanitarian organizations cannot function without relying on the media for the promotion of their cause. Humanitarian organizations must find new ways of using the media to create visibility and compel the public to act. The unconventional branding spot from Amnesty International testifies to this need, and the strategy behind the spot lets itself understand by reference to Luc Boltanski's notion of a Crisis of Pity in western culture. Rather than addressing the problematic as one of compassion fatigue, thus placing responsibility, guilt and shame on the potential benefactors, AI points to the problem of representation itself and sympathizes with its skeptics. Presupposing both the necessity of social action and the desire in the public to take on responsibility, the focus of the spot is on 'possibility', insisting that there is a reality outside the circle of representation in which social action is possible.

The absence of an explicit ideological stance in the spot renders immensely significant its affective mode because the affective mode carries a presupposition of the appeal's rationale. Inevitably, this emotionality serves not only to draw the attention of the audience, but also to justify the cause in question. The strategies employed to avoid triggering compassion fatigue bring about a need to engage some other affective register than compassion in order for an address to gain persuasive appeal. While compassion is clearly problematic and its substitution justifiable, the introduction of fear as affective drive for the humanitarian appeal introduces a new set of problems.

It seems clear that by participating in consumer culture, as inevitably they must, humanitarian organizations are presented with an enormous challenge. First, if it is inherent to the logic of marketing that consumers must feel their values and ideal identity mirrored in the advertisement, it follows that these advertisements will be more likely to consolidate existing values than offer reasons to modify them. Second, if consumerist logic demands for the advertisement to acknowledge the feelings of the consumer, this 'intimization' of the appeal makes it difficult for a humanitarian organization to place the rationale behind its cause outside of the consumer's desires.

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Identity and Appeal in the Humanitarian Brand

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Non-profit organisations belong to a sector where the diffusion of corporate norms and values has been very pronounced in recent years, bringing into play inherent tensions between commercial and non-commercial logics. This paper examines humanitarian discourse as an example of a domain of social life, which is branded and marketed as-if it were a corporate product. It discusses the factors that brings this change about and, on the basis of analyses of two humanitarian TV-spots, investigates the consequences in terms of the transformed organisational identities that emerge from their mediatisation.

In the past few decades, the number and influence of Non Governmental Organizations has escalated manifestly. The global number of NGOs with a social agenda more than quadrupled between the mid 70s and the mid 90s (Keck & Sikkink 1998). In the UK, for example, 185,000 charities were registered in 1999 (Sargeant, 1999), the number continuing to rise by as much as 5,000 a year. In the US, non-profit expenditures grew 77 percent faster than the American economy as a whole between 1977 and 1999 (Foroohar 2005). Globalization, the end of the cold war and the emergence of new communication technologies are commonly considered to have a tremendous impact on the growing importance of NGOs (Warketin, 2001; Risse, Ropp & Sikkink 1999; Porta et al 1999). Seeking to influence the direction of international public policy, NGOs and humanitarian organizations play an increasingly important role in monitoring global governance and bringing principles and values to the attention of policy makers (Held & McGrew 2002; Keane 2003). By holding both private and public sectors accountable, these organizations "are an important part of an explanation for the changes in world politics" (Keck & Sikkink 1998:2). Growing competition in the global market place, most likely, has an equal

role to play in a parallel development of the for-profit sector. Not only has the non-profit sector become a billion-dollar business in what Oxfam International executive director, Jeremy Hobbs, calls the 'moral economy'. In recent years, social responsibility is becoming an increasingly important element in the marketing strategies of large business corporations as a means for singling out their products and services in an increasingly competitive global market.

As the number of NGOs grows, their conditions of existence change and their managerial practices are pushed in new directions. Modern NGOs are to a lesser extent activist, non-hierarchical grass root structures, but increasingly engage staff with subject-specific expertise (law, management, journalism, marketing etc.), while the role of voluntary work decreases (Martens 2006; Staggenborg 1997; Meyer & Tarrow 1988). The mere number of NGOs that must compete for public attention, donations and government subsidiaries, bring about new demands for their ability to promote themselves. At the same time, neo-liberal political ideals have put pressure on the public sector and as a consequence, many non-profits have suffered from declining government support (Csaba 2005). Finally, due to numerous scandals in the non-profit sector in the 1990s, as perhaps most notoriously in Rwanda (Polman 2003), NGOs have faced growing demands for accountability and efficiency in their performance. The capacity of organizations to account for their raison d'etre and performance is becoming ever more vital in attracting, and retaining support as well as meeting the expectations of various stakeholders.

NGOS AND MEDIATIZATION

The aforementioned factors have lead to a blurring of the distinction between the traditional roles of the for-profit and non-profit sectors and have pushed non-profit organisations more forcefully into the media field. The operation of NGOs is now fundamentally, and self-perpetually, tied to the media and their creation of visibility, transparency and legitimacy in relation to the general public as well as specific stakeholders. One aspect of this attachment to the media is the increased attention to marketing and the introduction of branding into the sector.

> *"Charities with a strong recognizable brand attract more voluntary donations than those without.[…] Increasingly, charity brand status is being used to communicate meaning through a unique set of values or associations that define*

the charity not only in terms of what it does (its cause) but more importantly in terms of the values it represents. Transforming charity into brands allows donors to identify more precisely what the charity does and the values it represents. This in turn allows donors to identify and select those charities whose values most closely match their own" (Hankinson, 2001:1).

Practitioners as well as academics view corporate branding as an indispensable tool for any corporation in a globalised market (e.g. Balmer & Greyser 2006; Aaker 1996; Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000; de Chernatony et al. 2001; Hatch & Schultz 2001). Corporate branding should serve to enhance the esteem and loyalty of shareholders and to afford a means of differentiation from competitors, the need for differentiation bringing center stage the emotions and values of an organization (Balmer & Gray 2003). Brands can be understood as logical structures that channel consumer perceptions, akin to metaphors or myths, and give meaning to products and services for consumers (Kay 2006; Holt 2004). In this sense, a brand is the distillation of a product, service or corporate identity into a symbolic representation, a discursive construct. This construct occupies a discursive space with multiple competing discourses (Leitch & Richardson 2003, Fairclough 1992) and brands may therefore have multiple meanings attached to them. Branding, then, is the strategic management of these discourses and the unique selling proposition of an organisation becomes not its product or service, but the cultural status associated with it. Proponents of NGO branding argue that branding is simply an opportunity to communicate more explicitly the organization's core values, mission and vision, differing in no substantial way from the traditional communicative practices of non-profits (e.g. Grounds 2005). Indeed, some observers argue that the larger NGO brands are now becoming model exemplary for the commercial industry: "NGOs have become the new sophisticated communicators and perceived instigators of change in the global market place […] NGOs are no longer perceived as small bands of activists but rather as new 'super brands' surpassing the stature of major corporations, government bodies and even the media among consumers" (Wootliff & Deri 2001).

The value of introducing commercial strategies into the sector is far from uncontested. Branding of NGOs is ardently criticized for conflicting with basic ideals of the non-profit organization such as altruism, voluntarism and grass root activism.

The spread of managerial principles and advancement of capitalist logic and consumerism is by many considered a threat to civil society and democracy (Csaba 2005). The rearticulation of humanitarianism in a discourse of advertising, is seen as introducing a moral conflict by staging human misery alongside commodities in a field of desire, seduction and consumption, thrill, pass-time and passivity. As formulated by Baudrillard: "We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophy, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it" (Baudrillard 1994: 67).

Baudrillard's quote throws into relief another dimension of mediatisation that decisively impacts on humanitarian discourse: the media's capacity to fictionalise or trivialise suffering, emptying out its moral content in favour of its spectacular performance. Indeed, humanitarian discourse has long been dependent on the media and their ability to bring the misfortune of people outside of our immediate social environment into our living rooms. Increasingly, however, the vastness of misfortune and suffering to which the media expose us, is felt to have a domesticating and numbing effect, which may leave the spectator indifferent and cause what is commonly referred to as compassion fatigue (Tester 2001). The majority of the relatively few attempts in the literature to define compassion fatigue as a sociological concept point to the inaccessibility of action as a prime factor in its development (e.g. Tester 2001; Moeller 1999; di Giovanni 1994). Witnessing human misery lays a moral demand upon us, which we cannot satisfy through direct action when the misery is distant and mediated. In Zygmunt Bauman's words, the media give us artificial eyes and so "to restore the lost moral balance, we would need "artificial hands" stretching as far as our artificial eyes are able to" (Bauman, 2001:42). Our moral integrity as witnesses depends, in this view, on the media's ability to transmit a perception that action is possible and that the misery we witness is not inalterable and inevitable (Silverstone 2006).

The character of media reports on suffering since the eighties has been widely criticized for creating the impression that the suffering of the developing world is irremediable (e.g. Kinnick et al 1996; Ignatieff 1998). Market led journalistic practices are held responsible for creating simplistic and formulaic reports on suffering, which point to no causes or solutions, are ephemeral and compete for spectacularity. The relentless occurrence of new, more or less decontextualized instances of suffering

flickering through the media is thought to perpetuate the perception that as distant witnesses, we can do nothing to alleviate suffering in far away places. Compassion fatigue and the public's perception of its social inefficacy compose a challenging dilemma for humanitarian organizations, which have previously used the depiction of suffering in the media both to create legitimacy for the organization and its cause and to mobilize support from the public. Numerous studies have shown that far from passively absorbing the spectacles put before them, television viewers put to work important critical capabilities, enabling them to distance themselves from spectacles and make inferences about the intentions behind the production other than those manifestly presented in a program. (Liebes & Katz 1989). This critical relationship introduces suspicion, sometimes latent, at other times explicit about the emotions, desires and intentions which accompany representations of suffering (Boltanski, 1999).

In this way, the media confront humanitarian organizations with a two-pronged challenge with a perceived social inefficacy in their audiences on the one hand and high degrees of media literacy on the other hand. These are challenges linked specifically to these organizations' presence in a highly competitive media landscape. They force humanitarian organizations to fashion new strategies by which to use the media in a morally compelling manner.

ANALYZING PUBLIC HUMANITARIAN DISCOURSE

The nature of humanitarian organizations' branding strategies may have crucial implications for the construction of humanitarianism and, likely, more generally morality in the public sphere. In The Spectatorship of Suffering, Chouliaraki (2006) provides an analytical framework for investigating the construction and legitimation of ethical norms by the media, concerned in particular with the way the semiotic resources of media reports on distant suffering shape the public's relations and dispositions in relation distant sufferers. This 'Analytics of Mediation' is a framework for studying television as a mechanism of representation that construes human suffering within specific semantic fields where emotions and dispositions for action are made possible for the spectator. It takes its point of departure in the ethical norms embedded in reports on suffering and seeks to problematize the meaning-making procedures through which these norms acquire systematicity and legitimacy in and through television.

> *"The assumption behind the 'analytics of mediation' is that choices over how suffering is portrayed, where, when and with whom the suffering is shown to occur always entail specific ethical dispositions, independently of our own evaluative judgment on these dispositions as undesirable or desirable. The value of the 'analytics of mediation', in this respect, lies in its capacity to re-describe the semiotic constitution of suffering and, in so doing, to explicate the moral implications and political agendas that inform this constitution"* (Chouliaraki, 2005: 148).

It is a crucial aspect of Chouliaraki's Analytics of Mediation that it encompasses both the semiotics of the text, by looking into the multi-modality of media texts, and the power relations that constitute its social context, by looking at the constructions of the scene of suffering and the connectivities between sufferer and spectator in the texts. This dual focus implies that we cannot study the relations between the social entities, implicitly or explicitly involved in the text unless we pay attention to the multimodality of mediation, which accommodates consideration of the impact of technological factors on media semiosis. In the analyses below, I have adapted this integrated perspective on mediated suffering, on the one hand, and the conception of media semiosis, on the other, in order to frame the analysis of two branding spots from the Danish sections of Amnesty International and Red Cross.

Red Cross (RC) and Amnesty International (AI) have what are arguably the strongest international humanitarian brands. International RC has been found to be the best known international humanitarian organization in all regions of the world, known by 75% of the population, 99% of which evaluate it positively (Gallup: Voice of the People 2005). Similarly, Amnesty International has been rated the most trusted brand in Europe (Edelman Public Relations, 2003). While RC is a state-subsidized, operational NGO, focused on providing humanitarian relief across national boundaries on the basis of a strict neutrality and impartiality clause, AI is an independent advocacy organisation, which operates discursively, identifying persecutors and pressurizing state authorities through international, public disclosure. In this way the two organizations operate under very different financial and communicative circumstances. Yet, the two organizations enjoy similar levels of public support. In Denmark, AI counted 74.000 members in 2007 and RC 78.000 (or approximately 1.5% of the population) and in the following, we shall see that the

examples that show how in Denmark the two organizations, in spite of their differences, respond in very similar ways to the challenges described above. The two TV spots that are analyzed below, both accommodate perceived social inefficacy and high degrees of media literacy in their audiences. They testify to the problems involved in these organizations' presence in a highly competitive media landscape and to the conflicts between education and advertising discourses that this gives rise to.

Amnesty International, 2001

The spot from AI spot is composed of three tracks, a verbal, a visual and an auditory. There is no real-sound in the auditory which is a simple rhythmic theme of bongo drums and guitar scales. The verbal content of the spot is presented visually in the form of 6 simple sentences displayed on screen synchronically with the unfolding of six mutually unrelated visual scenes. All visual scenes show leisurely activity. In the first scene, a group of young boys is competing in an amateur soccer match, one boy jumping triumphantly in the field. Three elderly men bathing in the ocean, in the second scene, have a laugh and a toast with their coffee mugs. The theme of joy and celebration is repeated in the reunion of a young man with his girlfriend who returns from travels in scene three and soccer supporters dancing merrily in a fountain in scene four. Finally, in the fifth scene, two laughing children are chasing soap bubbles while we see a mother holding her new-born baby in the sixth and last scene. These joyous and celebratory visual scenes create a mood of euphoria which seems almost triumphant. In spite of this mood, however, what we see is not a celebration of accomplishment. On the contrary, all of the images depict futile action, pass-time.

Verbal		**Visual**
Frame	Theme	Visual scene
We could have shown	*TORTURE*	Boys playing soccer
We could have shown	*HATRED*	Elderly men relaxing in the sea
We could have shown	*ISOLATION*	A traveller's arrival & reunion
We could have shown	*FEAR*	Soccer supporters celebrating
But instead of showing	*WHAT WE FIGHT AGAINST*	Children playing with soap bubbles
We show	*WHAT WE FIGHT FOR*	Newborn in mother's arms
Support the fight for human rights – www.amnesty.dk		

The setting, as well as the white, middleclass actors in the spot, convey a sense that what is depicted is Us in the privileged West. Indeed there are several cultural references specifically to Denmark, such as the red and white soccer supporters performing a Danish ritual of celebration when flippantly dancing in the fountain. The giddiness of such scenes creates the impression of celebration of the audiences' own national culture. In this way, the affective appeal of the spot seems to a great extent to rely on nostalgia over the recipients' culture and values.

[*we could have shown HATRED*]

The verbal content is displayed on screen, one sentence per scene, with the last word, the 'theme', staggered: displayed in enlarged font on a separate line, appearing with a short delay and lingering on after the frame of the sentence has vanished. The isolated, enlarged display of these themes suggests them as headings for each of the visual scenes - a suggestion which, in fact, accentuates the harsh contrast between the two (see image above with text ' we could have shown hatred'). The verbal text concludes with *'instead of showing what we fight against, we show what we fight for'* followed

by *'Support human rights'* and so a correlation is created between the signification of the visual statements and the substance of human rights. What AI fights for, then, the ideals it wants to further and the values that are secured by human rights are those portrayed in the images. In this way, the spot portrays the substance of human rights as a notion of safety equated with carefree light-heartedness and of a notion of freedom as leisure.

These ideals are contrasted with the contents of the verbal, which presents what Amnesty 'fight against'. The 4 themes, *torture, hatred, isolation* and *fear*, are connected with different degrees of specificity to the agenda of the organization. While both *torture* and *isolation* may be taken as concrete references to AI's agenda as means of power exertion that can be advocated and legislated against, the word *isolation* and to some extent also *torture* occupy an ambiguous position between such a semantics of activity and of emotional states. The last two themes, *hatred* and *fear*, clearly belong to an emotional semantic and are connected with the agenda of AI only to the extent that they are emotions that may result from or induce the power exertions denoted by the other two themes. While *torture* and *isolation* may be defended as necessary instruments in the exercise of jurisdictional authority, *hatred* and *fear* are unequivocally negative. Making these expressions adjunctive to the expressions *fear* and *hatred* may to some extent emphasize the emotional aspects of the meaning of *torture* and *isolation*. In so doing, may dissociate the sum statement from the political realm while inscribing it into a private, emotional discourse, which is easy to relate to and hard to dismiss.

Following the logic of advertising, the spot resorts to recognisability and identification, achieving its force and sense of urgency by an affective appeal to a euphoric nostalgia over the audience's own cultural ideals. At the same time, however, the spot quite explicitly addresses its own reflections as to how to appeal to its audience. Discussing what to 'show', it places acts of visual representation centre stage in the genre of humanitarian appeal and in this way emphasises the act of mediation that AI takes upon itself to perform between distant suffering and western publics.. The repeated reference to what is *not* shown stresses the calculated nature of the representation and so points to its rationale without actually substantiating it. Presupposing the reasons not to show suffering, not only assigns the audience with knowledge of these reasons, but also to some extent attributes to them aversion

toward visual representations of atrocities. In this way, a presupposed compassion fatigue discourse lies at the core of the spot. The suffering, courtesy to the audience, is precluded to silent, verbal statements displayed on the screen, where it becomes like a whisper behind the perceptually more powerful visual representation.

Danish Red Cross, 2005

The second TV-spot was part of a campaign associated with a branding partnership formed between Danish Red Cross and the mineral water Aqua d'Or'. A small part of the purchase price of a bottle of water is donated to Red Cross' campaign for clean drinking water in Africa while Aqua d'Or gains the right to use the Red Cross logo for branding purposes. The spot is 30 seconds long, visually minimalist displaying two young actors in a white space, accompanied by an auditory track consisting of the gentle trickling of water, a simple piano tune and a hushed, female voice over.

Red Croos spot: 00:22

Red Cross spot: 00:23

The imagery is taken entirely out of the realm of realism. What we see resembles a magazine fashion ad coming to life in a sort of tableau vivant. The spot involves a young male and female actor, both of them well-known Danish supermodels, in white cotton underwear. The theme of the spot is explicitly erotic, displaying a series of erotic positions with only one party visualised in full at a time, while the two only

appear simultaneously in small shots. In the first screen, we see the girl in a posture of passionate absorption against a wall, she fades away as the male party appears fulfilling his role in the display and this pattern is repeated throughout the spot.

The synecdochal strategy of never showing the erotic scene in its entirety, renders the display more symbolically erotic than perceptually so. In fact, a discourse of purity can be argued to expand the semiotic modes - from the serenity of the trickling water in the audio, the white and cleansed space, to the perfection and discipline of the human bodies. Rather than portraying the life-sustaining qualities of water, which make it relevant to Red Cross, the spot draws its cleansing qualities to portray an ideal of beauty and purity which makes it attractive as a life-style object.

> *Everybody knows sex sells. That's why Louise and Christian have dropped their clothes. Maybe it's a cheap trick, but, you know what?.. if it can help more than a billion people who don't have clean drinking water, then that's ok by us. You can help too. Just by drinking more water. Buy Aqua d'Or and support* Red Cross.

The voice-over is read in the hushed, breathy voice of Danish Hollywood actress, Connie Nielsen, using a language belonging to a young, casual and familiar register. Through its linguistic style, the spot not only addresses a young audience, but also enlists with this segment itself. The voice that the organization is provided with is far from a voice of power, of authority or reprimand. On the contrary, it is a voice which shows full solidarity with its youthful audience. The voice does not commit to

any involvement as to the visual contents, but commits only to accepting it. The only agents in the verbal are the models, while there is no intentionality involved for anyone else, thus dissociating RC from this commodification of its cause, while at the same time allowing RC to benefit from applying this type of aesthetics. While a certain cynicism about the state of the public's sense of responsibility for the well-being of far-away others seems to be at play, along with a rhetoric of 'end justifies the means' which one would have thought foreign to humanitarian ideas, this occurs without irony. Commercial strategies are not taunted by the spot, nor is the audience taunted with the decadence that is ascribed to it by the visual. The text presents its own persuasive strategy as a means to an end, and in so doing, the text suggests a contrast between the motivations it attributes to its audience with respect to why they might support the cause and its own motivation. It achieves this contrast without being condescending or moralizing, in part because of its clear, linguistically coded, loyalty with its audience. At the same time, while the visual appeals to desire and consumption like any advertisement and thus constructs an addressee who will respond as intended only if offered a lifestyle object for consumption, the verbal text does accommodate a different kind of recipient. In '*you can help too*', is the contours of a donor, who does feel a humanitarian call to help people in need and will respond according to the intentions of the addresser by virtue of this call.

Similarly to what we saw in the Amnesty spot, the verbal and the visual present separate, contrastive discourses. The visual presents an advertising discourse on purity, whereas the verbal, this time literally in a whisper, presents the humanitarian cause behind the spot. The representation of the humanitarian cause, and the suffering that underlies it, is limited to the subordinate clause *if it can help more than a billion people who don't have clean drinking water* presenting the problem RC targets, separated from its context, sources and consequences. Although in this sense, the cause is back-grounded, the magnitude of the problem is represented numerically, providing a powerful impact which is, in fact, intensified by its understatement. Not only does this way of representing suffering steer clear of a moralizing approach to the recipient, the powerful understatement also serves to defuse any reverse moralisation with respect to the commerciality of the persuasive strategy on the part of Red Cross. The result is at once provoking and disarming.

The RC spot is an extreme example of the paradox that emerges at the intersection between commercial and altruistic interests. By virtue of entering into a branding partnership with an organization with a product to sell, the traditional humanitarian action is substituted by the purchase of a product and thus RC volunteers their cause to be quite literally commodified. What makes the paradox extreme is that this commodity is water, marketed as a luxury product, while it is at the same time the vital basic need that RC aims to provide for the billions of people whose lives are threatened from the lacking of it.

APPEALING IDENTITY OR HUMANITARIAN APPEAL?

Competition for visibility and demands for professionalism and efficiency drives humanitarian organizations into a media landscape that is characterized with skepticism of representation, high media literacy and some degree of compassion fatigue. Not only must the humanitarian organization find new ways of mobilizing the public, in addition, market forces compel the organization to rebrand itself to create a new kind of legitimacy, which is not compassion based. This is the dilemma that humanitarian organizations are faced with today. Although neither of the two spots presented here refers directly to this dilemma, they– along with many, if not most, other such advertisements today- are saturated with it. The spots both employ an advertising aesthetic and their persuasive force is not compassion or justice based. In the two cases discussed here, the affectual potential draws on nostalgia and desire, while using properties of the audience's own culture to appeal to values of light-

heartedness, in the case of AI and purity in the case of RC. In neither of these cases is it by any means obvious that these values correspond to the values that shape the identity of the organisation. Branding is encouraged in the non-profit sector as an opportunity for the organization to be reflexive about its values and communicate these more explicitly. However, while Amnesty International defines themselves with expressions such as 'international solidarity', 'justice', 'outrage' and 'critical dialogue' and the defining principles of Danish Red Cross are 'humanity', 'impartiality' and 'neutrality', neither of these values seem to be reflected in the spots discussed above. To the extent that these values may still play a role in understanding the spot, this is based on already existing brand knowledge.

In response to compassion fatigue, the new branding strategies of these organizations, somewhat paradoxically, involve the suppression of the humanitarian causes they serve. The beneficiary of the appeal is excluded from representation and to the extent that suffering, which is the raison d'etre for these organisations, is present in the spots, it is so in the form of a whisper – by means of silent words in the Amnesty spot and a hushed subordinate clause in the voice over of Red Cross. Both spots are characterized by a contrast between the contents of the verbal and the visual. The spots point to their makers' reflections over what to visually represent and while they lay emphasis on the fact that they are not representing suffering, misfortune and injustice, they provide no rationale for this choice. Rather than making themselves subject to the "scepticism of representation", as Luc Boltanski calls it (Boltanski 1999, Vestergaard 2006), the spots use a montage-technique, where the dissonance between two explicit discourses forces the recipient himself to construct a meaningful relation between them. Out of this sense-making, a new discourse is constructed. This new discourse belongs to the recipient only and so the creator of the message cannot be held accountable for it. In the spots discussed in this paper – and these are by no means unique, but rather examples of a new genre of humanitarian appeal– there is discourse of reasons to act relegated to this third internal representation, where the credibility of the organisation is not at stake. This may be a discourse of compassion or solidarity, but crucially, the reasons to act are not provided or controlled by the organisation. The spots recognize their young audiences' media literacy and knowledge of the repertoire of persuasive devices at the media's disposal. In order to maintain credibility, while using strategies that traditionally belong to the commercial sector, the non-profits point to the fact that

this is indeed what they do, thus including the audience, not as objects or victims of persuasion, but as colluders and complicits.

The spots raise two essential questions about humanitarianism as rearticulated in an advertising discourse. First, is it possible to make an advertisement appealing on the basis of one set of values, while at the same time providing reasons for action based on another set of values? If, for instance, the Amnesty spot is appealing because its produces nostalgic feelings about the audience's culture, is it possible for it to provide a reason for action that lies beyond this nostalgia or is the spot in fact inviting us to protect human rights in order to protect or promote this culture? By not offering the public reasons to act that correspond to the organization's own, humanitarian organizations may run the risk of being appealing at the cost of the humanitarian appeal. Secondly, is there an inherent contradiction between the logic of recognition, central to advertising, and the logic of education or awareness-raising which is central to the identity of most, if not all, humanitarian organizations? While the social change, which is the ultimate goal of such an organization, may be aided by donations that allow the organization to go about its business, the arousal and maintenance of public social awareness is, after all, its fundamental prerequisite. In this way, despite promises of making visible and explicit the identity of an organization, mediatisation may in fact obligate the brand to such forceful consumer demands that a deep conflict of identity is produced that may ultimately lead to the complete transformation of the identity of the organization.

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Mediatized Humanitarianism:
Trust and Legitimacy in the Age of Suspicion

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The paper investigates the consequences of mediatization for the legitimation strategies of humanitarian organizations. Based on a (full population) corpus of approximately 400 pages of brochure material from 1970-2007, the micro-textual processes involved in humanitarian organizations' efforts to legitimate themselves and their moral claim are examined. A time trend analysis of the prioritization of actors in the material indicates that marked shifts in legitimation loci have taken place during the past 40 years. A discourse analysis unfolds the dominant discourses behind these shifts and relates them to a problem of trust.

INTRODUCTION

> *"The advances in communication technology have heightened the interaction between global and local levels. [...] The need to try to understand, to decode, to make sense of that information is greater than ever, all the more so because its sheer quantity and omnipresence cannot explain a world that is generally perceived as being more complex, more dangerous and beset by increasingly acute differences of identity"* (Daccord, 2005, 698: 21)

With these words, Yves Daccord, Director of Communication for the International Committee of the Red Cross, in 2005 pointed to the challenges for

humanitarian organizations of operating in a mediatized reality. Greater density of information relevant to humanitarian operations does not necessarily lead to more informed and engaged publics. On the contrary, as Daccord contends:

> *"The growing volume of information facilitated by the new communication technologies paradoxically renders communication more difficult and is tending to deepen the distrust of various audiences"* (ibid)

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how this perceived public distrust is reflected in the communicative strategies of humanitarian organizations. Assuming that such distrust puts immense pressure on the organization's need for and ability to create legitimacy for itself, the paper examines humanitarian legitimation strategies over the past 40 years.

The research design is based on the argument that legitimacy for humanitarian organizations is a factor not only of the organizations' performance but also of the perceived legitimacy of the three actors in the humanitarian exchange - the benefactor, the beneficiary and the donor. Brochures from the Danish sections of three humanitarian organizations -Save the Children, Red Cross and Amnesty International – are subjected to analysis with a view to identifying shifts in discourses with respect to the relative prioritization of actors and the nature of their representation in the texts. In order to draw out a time trend from the 40 year period, the total 400 pages of brochures are subjected to a one-dimensional content analysis with a view to establishing the relative prioritization of the three actors and periodizing patterns of distribution (*actor distribution analysis*) On the basis of the patterns identified, typical examples are picked out and subjected to discourse analysis (*actor articulation analysis*).

The time trend analysis shows that the distribution of actors has undergone substantial change over the period, the least prioritized participant from the 1970 gradually gaining prominence until in the 1990 and 2000 it is by far the dominant participant. The discourse analysis shows that these changes do indeed reflect essential changes in legitimation strategies employed at different points in the past 40 years.

MEDIATIZATION OF THE HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATION

The paper investigates how the fact of a reality which is saturated with the omnipresence of media reflects on the practices of humanitarian organizations. To do this, the paper draws together the concept of 'Mediation' (Silverstone 2006, Chouliaraki 2005, Couldry 2008) with the concept of 'Mediatization' (Hjarvard 2008, Krotz 2007, Schultz 2004, Chouliaraki & Morsing 2009). Mediatization, broadly, refers to the '*process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic*' resulting in enduring changes to the character, function and structure of social institutions and cultural processes. Institutions to an increasing degree become dependent on resources that the media control, and will have to submit to the rules the media operate by in order to gain access to those resources (Hjarvard 2008).

Since the 1960s, humanitarian organizations have become increasingly dependent upon the mass media as interface between themselves and stakeholders whose financial and moral support their existence depends upon (Tester 2001, McLagan 2006). This has discursive as well as non-discursive manifestations. Which humanitarian disasters find their way into public awareness depends in large measure on the practices of global reporting (Benthall 1993, Minear et al 1996, Rotberg & Weissm 1996, IFRCRCS 2005). Global reporting is widely criticized for its fleeting coverage, pornography of images, ethnocentrism and 'calculus of death' (Cottle & Nolan 2007, Seaton 2005, Moeller 1999). Humanitarian organizations, for their part, are reproached for adapting to these 'media logics' by letting the selection of beneficiaries be guided by media (and political) agendas and by staging aid-work for the purpose of remediation (Vaux 2006, Moeller 1999). In the discursive realm, as the number of NGOs grows and government support declines, competition for visibility is sharpened and distinctiveness is made a key concern (Grounds 2005, Richie et al 1999, Eikenburry & Kluver 2004). Communicative practices become increasingly professionalized, humanitarian staff comes to include journalists and other communication specialists and humanitarian campaigns are designed and implemented by commercial advertising agencies. The reliance on the media increasingly pertains to more than mediating suffering, that is, bringing distant suffering into the living rooms of those more fortunate. It becomes about creating transparency and accountability, about corporate branding and the

cultivation of brand communities (Bennet & Sargeant 2003, Ritchie et al 1999, Vestergaard 2010).

It is my claim, however, that effects of functioning in a media saturated world extend beyond the adaptation to media logics. It involves also the influence of audiences which are transformed by media. In this way, I incorporate into my understanding of institutional mediatization the notion of 'mediation' according to which the social and cultural transformation *"in turn, transforms the conditions under which any future media can be produced and understood"* and where *"interpretations flow back into production and outward into general social and cultural life"* (Couldry 2008:380, see also Chouliaraki & Morsing 2010). Mediatization thus understood is a thoroughly dialectic process of mutual constitution between humanitarian organizations and audiences which themselves continually undergo transformations without homogenous or isolatable causality. A crucial and decisive dimension of this dialectic is trust. Below an erosion of public trust is discussed as a particularly powerful factor in the mediatization of humanitarian organizations.

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF TRUST

The mediated confrontation with suffering to which humanitarian organizations subject their audiences, puts them in a fragile moral position, as witnesses without the ability to act directly on the circumstances inducing the suffering (Bauman 2001). According to Luc Boltanski, to preserve dignity, as distant witnesses we must either find arguments to reject the moral demand or be committed to action (Boltanski 1999). The Western public, he argues, suffers from precisely a lack of confidence in the possibility for action and therefore tendencies to reject the moral claim strengthen. This is the likely cause of common psychological and rhetorical defense strategies against the demand of the distant sufferer (Seu 2010, Cohen & Seu 2002) Distrust may serve as a defense strategy against the humanitarian claim and questioning the authenticity, authority and appropriateness of humanitarian communication in the media may endorse reluctance to acknowledge the painful reality of distant suffering or the willingness to assume responsibility for alleviating it.

Publics do not merely take media content at face value. Rather than passively absorbing media content, consumers are aware of issues of authenticity and intention in media production and put to work important critical abilities enabling them to make inferences that go far beyond manifest content (Cohen 1994, Liebes and Katz 1989). Studies show a marked decline in trust in media and media content since the mid 1970s (Carlson 2002, Duffy 2003, Levine 2003). Due to factors such as the increasing commercialization of media institutions, political spin, corporate PR and in general the vanishing division between genres of information, entertainment and advertising, the mediated public sphere is generally perceived more as a space for manipulation than a space for the negotiation of public opinion (Bakir & Barlow 2007). This distrust is a key challenge for humanitarian organizations, which must disseminate knowledge and appeals through the media. The consequences of mediatization - agenda setting, the staging of action, commercialized communication strategies etc - is likely to cause skepticism as to the sincerity of humanitarian communication and ultimately perhaps, the humanitarian cause.

In a recent audience study on the response to humanitarian appeals, Cohen and Seu find that while audiences do not dismiss appeals' underlying moral claim, a deep aversion to humanitarian appeals as such is common (Cohen & Seu 2002). Audiences carry out negotiations with their own emotional responses: they are aware of and resent being targeted as mere receivers and their emotions are filtered through socially constructed discourses that contain, if not disclaimers, disavowals and denials, then powerful contextualizations. Audiences express feeling 'part of a beleaguered public audience that has to train itself to read between the lines of these texts and to defend itself against incessant attempts to get something out of its members' (ibid: 198). The study revealed the common occurrence of direct anger toward the organization, a resentful sense of being patronized, unfairly treated and – above all – manipulated. Cohen and Seu conclude that the undenied and undeniable truths of the message become irrelevant and its moral appeal undermined as soon as the audience feels that the information has been selected to emotionally blackmail them into giving money. At the extreme, they contend, this may delegitimize the message and the sender. Any shift in focus from the content of the information to its imputed manipulative function subtly turns the relationship between the organization and

audience into a buffer zone, an extra layer to distance oneself from the horrors of the information (ibid)

Finally, humanitarian organizations have been increasingly haunted by suspicions as to the motivation of humanitarian action. They are accused of paternalism and of acting simply as the moral conscience of wealthy philanthropists and latter day imperialists (Darcy 2005, Tester 2010). Such critiques are bolstered by the intervention of the media, because the public visibility of humanitarian action renders it more sensitive to accusations of self-promotion both on the part of organizations, their employees and members and their supporters.

If distrust in these ways characterizes the audiences to which humanitarian organizations must appeal in order to ensure continued moral and financial support, this puts under severe pressure the legitimacy of the humanitarian organization. Legitimacy is essential for humanitarian organizations because they take on the role as representatives. They represent those who suffer as well as those who want to help –be it governments or private institutions and individuals. The role of representative is a position of power; power to make claims and power to distribute resources and it is this position of power that makes humanitarian organizations susceptible to criticisms of legitimacy, not least with the public.

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PROBLEM OF LEGITIMACY

Legitimacy is a central concept in the corporate literature, where stakeholders' perception of social performance is increasingly perceived as one of the most vital assets of the corporation (Cornelissen 2004, Christensen et al 2008). An organization is perceived as legitimate if it pursues socially acceptable goals in a socially acceptable manner. According to Suchman's formative definition, organizational legitimacy results from the organization's cultural embeddedness and is a continuous and often unconscious process in which the organization reacts to external expectations. It is the *"generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper and appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions"* (1995: 574). In the context of commercial corporations, moral legitimacy depends on moral judgments on the organization's output, procedures, structures and leaders (Suchman 1995,

Palazzo & Scherer 2006) and to a great extent this conception is adopted in the NGO literature. Although the mission of an NGO is always 'to promote social welfare', the legitimacy of the individual NGOs is far from irrefutable. Recent years have seen growing questioning of NGO legitimacy, conceptualised as problems of performance (Biekart 1999, Fowle 1997), accountability (Slim 2002, Edwards and Hulme 1995, Saxby 1996) and representativeness (Pearce 1997, Slim 2003). How effective is the resource use of NGOs in terms of actually assisting those in need, and to what extent are efforts impartial rather than selective? (Ossewarde 2008) Does the NGO hold itself accountable for consequences of its actions and to what extent does accountability go 'downward', to beneficiaries rather than just upward to those with power over the organization? And finally, by what authority do NGOs speak on behalf of beneficiaries and are there problematic issues of power involved in this form of representation? While these questions are clearly important, this literature, however, fails to take as its starting point the simple, fundamental difference between commercial organizations and NGOs that while the former presents *offers* to the public, the latter presents *claims* and in so doing the literature fails to take into account the legitimacy of the basic moral claim of INGOs: the extent to which the beneficiaries targeted are considered worthy of assistance and the extent to which the publics to which this claim is made, consider themselves liable. The literature more or less implicitly treats this aspect of NGO legitimacy as if part of such organizations' 'cognitive legitimacy', derived from a fixed moral base and thereby as taken for granted and not subject to stakeholder evaluation. In Hugo Slim's words:

> *An organisational mission to challenge and end human rights violations is derived explicitly from a moral case based on the values of human equality, dignity, impartiality, justice, freedom and personal and collective responsibility. This moral case gives human rights organizations and NGOs an ethical legitimacy that resonates with the moral reasonableness of people across the world. Expression and recognition of this fundamental morality is essential to an organisation's legitimacy.* (2002, np)

The paper analyses the discursive legitimation of humanitarian organizations, exploring to what extent these can be understood as concerned with

performance, accountability and representativeness. It does so with a particular interest in how the basic moral claim of humanitarian organizations figures into strategies of legitimation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Rather than viewing NGO legitimacy as dependent on structural and procedural factors, (Atac 1999, Saxby 1996, Pearce 1997), it is understood in this paper as socially constructed (Suchman 1994, Lister 2003) and an organization's management of legitimacy as in part a discursive task. The research design is based on the argument that due to the moral nature of the practices of the humanitarian organization, issues of legitimacy are complex and involve more than mere evaluations of performance. Legitimacy depends on the perceived validity of the moral claim; the extent to which the beneficiaries targeted are considered worthy of assistance and the extent to which the publics to which this claim is made, are considered liable. I suggest that the perceived validity of each of the three actors in the humanitarian exchange- the benefactor, the beneficiary and the donor – contribute to the overall perceived legitimacy of the organization and that the discursive management of legitimacy by humanitarian organizations can be understood as organized according to such a tripartite scheme of legitimation.

The analytical framework builds on the Analytics of Mediation the aim of which is to explicate moral implications and political agendas involved in the semiotic constitution of suffering (Chouliaraki 2006). The Analytics of Mediation is a framework for studying television as a mechanism of representation that construes human suffering within specific semantic fields where emotions and dispositions for action are made possible for the spectator. It posits that choices over how suffering is portrayed, that is, where, when and with whom suffering it is shown to occur, always entails specific proposals to the spectator for engaging with the sufferer. In this way, it is both the representation of the sufferers themselves - the agency and humanization, they are symbolically endowed with - and also the system of other agents that operate in relation to the scene of

suffering which affect audiences' orientations towards the suffering. The interaction of benefactors and the kind of ethical responsibility which obliges them to act, equally contributes to humanizing the sufferers and moralizing the audience (Chouliaraki 2005). This analytical framework is applied to the investigation of humanitarian brochures which, unlike news reports, are organized around and delimited by this system of actors and it is directed specifically toward humanitarian action. The legitimacy of a humanitarian organization is understood as constituted by the legitimacy of the organization's relation to beneficiaries and donor publics. At the same time, following the Analytics of Mediation, the social identities and relations that are set up by humanitarian discourses are understood as constraining the identities and relations that are possible and imaginable for the audience that is addressed. In this way, the discourse not only legitimates the organization, but at the same time both reflects and constructs particular moral dispositions for the audience.

Bringing together the notions of mediation and mediatization allows me to examine the relationship of mutual constitution between practices of mediated communication and public identity on the one hand, and to situate these practices within the historical context of the contemporary, media-saturated environment on the other. More specifically, the notion of *mediation* allows me to treat appeals as evidence of shifts in the public identity of the organization (in terms of legitimacy) as well as that of the audience. The notion of *mediatization* ads a historical dimension to this, making possible evaluation of how organizational practices of communication, and the identities they project, are changing across time. The shifts in public identities constructed in appeal texts over time, can then be understood as resulting, at least in part, from their embedding in a technologically saturated environment which is marked by lack of public trust and an ensuing need for legitimacy.

DATA

Taking as examples the Danish sections of three of the largest international humanitarian organizations, The Danish Red Cross, Amnesty International and Save the Children, brochures from the period 1970 to 2005 are analyzed. The medium and genre of the brochure is chosen because this is the legitimating

device par excellence of such organizations. It is a medium, which is independent of media gate-keepers, allows for rich information and offers itself for contemplation, and as such it invites for explicit legitimization to a significantly greater extent than other mass outlets such as newspaper and TV ads. Further, the humanitarian brochure is a highly conservative genre of communication, showing remarkably little variation in terms of form as well as content, between organizations and across time. Its stable form throughout the period as well as its relatively homogenous contents makes this text genre particularly suitable for and sensitive to comparative analysis. Finally, it is characteristic of the humanitarian brochure genre precisely that it always presents the three actors in the humanitarian exchange: the donor, the benefactor/intermediary and the beneficiary distributed across blocks of verbal text, imagery and graphics. The beneficiary is represented in images and text, which describes various aspects of circumstances of need. The benefactor is represented in terms of organizational characteristics, historical efforts, mandate, ideology etc. The donor, finally, is represented primarily as a subject position provided by the options and reasons for action offered by the text. While pictorial representations of the donor and benefactor do occur, the overwhelming majority of brochure images depict beneficiaries.

The data set consists of brochures collected from The Danish Royal library, the archives of which contain all small print materials published in Denmark since 1697. Brochures are defined here as printed publications of 1-20 pages length and the archives contained 130 such brochures from the three organizations in the period 1970-2007. Brochures were defined as appeals if they contained an explicit call for action, be it donations, membership or voluntary work and the archives contained 66 such brochures. The corpus of appeal brochures amounts to a total of approximately 400 pages, relatively evenly distributed between the three organizations. The dataset thus constitutes the full population of appeal brochures from the Danish Red Cross, Danish Amnesty International and Danish Save the Children Fund in the 40-year period.

METHOD

Taking a discursive approach to legitimation strategies, the paper examines representations of the three participants in the humanitarian exchange; the

beneficiary, the benefactor and the donor. Representations of the *beneficiary* can be construed as oriented toward either 'documentation' or 'affinity'. 'Documentation' involves the representation of beneficiaries with a view to authenticating beneficiaries' need or authenticating the results of the organization's work. 'Affinity', on the other hand, is a mode of representing beneficiaries which serves to create a sense of kinship, with a view to extending audiences' sense of responsibility to distant localities. The *benefactor*, that is, the organization's self-representation includes reports on the organization's objectives and ideology, accounts for its working procedures and its performance; effectiveness, cost-efficiency, expertise and experience or for its organizational structure; its management, its membership mandate as well as its legal mandate. Each brochure presents variously prioritized mixes of these aspects of the organization's identity. Finally, *donor* representation can be construed as constructing either options for action or reasons for action. Options for action are provided through descriptions of how the audience may contribute to the work of the organization, by way of donations, membership and different types of activism and volunteer work. Reasons for action, on the other hand, are sometimes made manifest but more commonly embedded in the subject positions created by the brochure texts. Reasons for action may be other-oriented or self-oriented and may be framed in positive terms, providing motivations for action, or in negative terms, disarming arguments against humanitarian action.

As it is its ambition to place the examination of humanitarian legitimation in the historical frame of mediatization, the paper develops an experimental methodology which combines a quantitative time trend analysis, to open up and structure the large historical data set, with a discourse analysis, which makes possible the unfolding of the particular discursive changes of which the trends are indications. In this way, the time trend analysis both motivates and corroborates the case-based discourse analysis.

The tripartite scheme of legitimation described above, informs the method by raising the question as to the representation of the three actors in the humanitarian appeal texts. Actor representations are used as a lens for investigating which discursive shifts have taken place over the 40-year period,

where the time trend analysis maps out the relative prioritization and prominence of actors (*actor distribution analysis)* and the discourse analysis explores the nature of actor representations (*actor articulation analysis*). In order to operationalize the notion of actor prominence, a relatively crude measure has been developed, which relies solely on the linguistic organization of the text. This measure does not take into account visual prominence in the brochures – size and type of fonts and imagery – first and foremost because spatial prominence does not lend itself readily for quantification. In addition, it is not entirely clear that the same semiotic codes are involved in this type of signification –visual prioritization may be tied less to legitimation and more to factors such as conspicousness, intelligibility etc. The cruder measure of linguistic prioritization has been chosen - at the expense of a spatial, proportional analysis which respected to a greater extent the materiality of the brochure - with a view to showing discursive shifts with as simple means as possible while reducing the risk of confounding factors.

In the time trend analysis, then, the question of prioritization of actors is examined by investigating actor prominence in the linguistic organization of the texts (*actor distribution analysis).* Taking this analytical approach enables the uncovering of patterns and shifts on the basis of a dataset which includes all brochures from the three case organizations during the period in question. In the discourse analysis, case brochures which exemplify the actor distribution patterns uncovered in the time trend analysis, are analyzed with a view to identifying the legitimation discourses with which they are associated (*actor articulation analysis*).

The very limited literature on humanitarian communication tends to focus on visual representations of sufferers. In the following, I will first provide an account of the development of brochure imagery for each organization. Subsequently, I will relate this to the linguistic contents of the brochures, in the *actor distribution analysis* and *actor articulation analysis,* in order to enable a discussion which takes both modalities into consideration.

VISUAL BROCHURE TEXT

Brochure imagery overwhelmingly prioritizes the beneficiary, at all times and across organizations

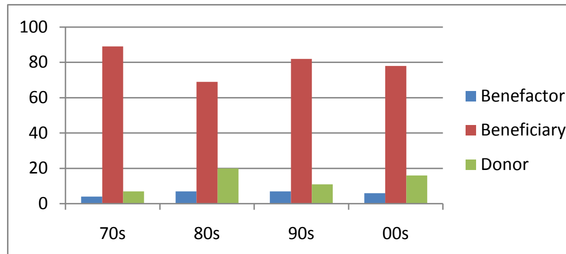

Figure 1: Proportion of visual actor representation per decade across organizations (percent)

There are, however, marked differences between the three organizations. Imagery from *Amnesty International* was during the 1970s and 1980s of two types. By far the dominant type is drawings which depict the scene of suffering showing imprisonment, isolation, torture and hanging. Over time, photographic portraits gain prominence and these are consistently printed along with names and histories of the individuals that are portrayed. Mid-to late 1980s the imagery employed by Amnesty changes in several ways and a much more diverse visual appears. In 1985, alongside the more traditional, dismal Amnesty drawings and portraits, the first 'relief' photo appears, showing the reunion of a political prisoner with his son, along with the story of his incarceration and Amnesty's advocacy for his release. From then on, Amnesty brochures contain always a mix of 'before' and 'after' imagery, both of which are always associated with the specific story of the individuals that are portrayed. Additionally, towards the end of the 1980s we start seeing protesting beneficiaries and finally, the donor finds his way into imagery too, by means of celebrity photos and increasing use of photos of 'civilian' activists. In the case of *Danish Red Cross,* imagery from the 1970s is overwhelmingly dominated by photos of women with children. In the 1980s these become intersected here and there by photos of Red Cross trucks and (female) personnel. From the 1980s onward the Red Cross, mostly by way of its logo, is present in very nearly every single photo but otherwise the motifs remain the same until beginning 2000s. In the 2000s the male figure is,

interestingly, introduced, not only as a worker, but also as a sufferer. For *Save the Children*, finally, imagery throughout the period consists of photos of children, consistently close-ups of smiling children[1]. Approximately a third of these photos depict children who are being taken care of, sometimes getting fed but mostly getting medical care. The only occurrences of children who appear distressed are among those under medical treatment.

While the brochures from the three organizations, as we shall see below, show great similarity with respect to the discourses that emerge from the linguistic text, in terms of visual semiotics the three organizations show marked differences. Amnesty's visual style is distinct and characterized on the one hand by the use of case stories and on the other hand the inclusion of the source and context of suffering. With AI the suffering body is always located. This is in sharp contrast with Red Cross and Save the Children imagery which rarely depicts suffering and never the context of suffering – for instance by showing refugee camps, scenes of war or devastation, or situating their portraits in such a scenery. Instead, these organizations depict suffering exclusively by way of bodily expression - faces that show despair or emaciated bodies.

While the visual semiotics of Save the Children remain virtually unchanged throughout the 40 year period, important shifts take place in Amnesty and Red Cross, gradually expanding from exclusive representation of sufferers, to inclusion of the other parties in the humanitarian exchange. From 1980, the Red Cross increasingly make visual self-reference, such that some representation of the organization is eventually included in almost every single photo of beneficiaries in the shape of a logo, a red cross van, bag of flour etc, with the effect of tying all beneficiaries to the organization and their relief efforts, rendering all photos 'after'-photos and finally of course, giving Red Cross as a visual brand high prominence. For both Amnesty and the Red Cross, in the late 1980s the brochures come to include images of 'donors' either by way of celebrities or images of civilian 'activists'. Additionally, the representation of beneficiaries undergo important changes. In the late 1980s, Amnesty's visuals

[1] I exclude from this discussion a campaign in the late 1990, which involved a series of brochures on sex tourism. These involve an entirely different problematic (where the reader is positioned as potential perpetrator)

start using a more active representation of beneficiaries, associating it with protest and resistance and perhaps most remarkably, the Red Cross brochures ten years later show the introduction of the male figure into beneficiary representation, which has previously, as we have seen, been cleansed of anything but women and small children. These changes in the representational conventions around the figure of the beneficiary seem to mirror critiques that have been raised against the humanitarian pity figures as condescending. I will return to both the expansion of actors in the visual domain and the reconfiguration of the figure of the beneficiary below.

Three points to be investigated further emerge from the visual data: First, visual representations of suffering have at all times been rare in Red Cross and Save the Children materials and they are always decontextualized. Second, where beneficiaries early in the period dominated the material, gradually we see an expansion of actors in the visual domain. And third, a rearticulation of the beneficiary figure seems to take place in the 1990s and 2000s. In order to understand these semiotic choices and developments, in the following analysis, I investigate the verbal text of the brochures with a view to examining in which wider discursive developments the visual semiosis partakes.

VERBAL BROCHURE TEXT

Taking its point of departure in the assumption that the development of humanitarian legitimation discourses is best understood by examining the representation of the actors in the humanitarian exchange, the analysis of the verbal text investigates first how much attention is given to each humanitarian actor at different points in time (actor distribution analysis) and subsequently what the nature of this attention is (actor articulation analysis)

ACTOR DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

To establish which actor is placed centrally in the text, this analysis draws on the linguistic notion of 'sentence topic' (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). The frequency with which an actor referent is placed in sentence topical position is considered indicative of its centrality to the discourse. For each sentence in the

400 pages of brochure material, the referent occupying the position of main clause grammatical subject (topic) is assigned to either of the actor categories, 'benefactor', 'beneficiary' and 'donor' where the benefactor category includes any referent related to the organization and its work, the beneficiary category any referent related to the situation of need and finally, the donor category includes all reference to existing donors and to the audience as prospective donors. This analysis results in calculations of the proportion of topical representation of the three actors in the appeal texts. The proportions are taken as indications of the relative centrality of the actor to the legitimation strategy employed. For the sake of analytical simplicity, the analysis does not take into account the relative visual salience of a given sentence in the organization of the text.

	CODING FRAME
Category	**Coding rule**
Beneficiary	Referents associated with the scene of suffering
Benefactor	Referents associated with the humanitarian organization
Donor	Referents associated with audience, including implicit subject of imperatives
Coding Unit: Grammatical subjects of main clauses	

Figure 2: Coding frame for actor distribution analysis

The results of the actor distribution analysis are displayed in figure 3 below.
This analysis shows, first, that contrary to the visual modality, the beneficiary category does not have great priority over the other actors at any point during the period. In the brochures from the 1970s, however, the beneficiary is dominant and has substantially higher representation than at any other time in the period. The benefactor category, the organization's self-representation, has considerably higher representation in the 1980s than at any other time and is during the 1980s by far the dominant actor. The donor category, which is the least prominent actor in the 1970s, shows a steady and robust increase over the period, making it the dominant actor in the 1990s and 2000s.

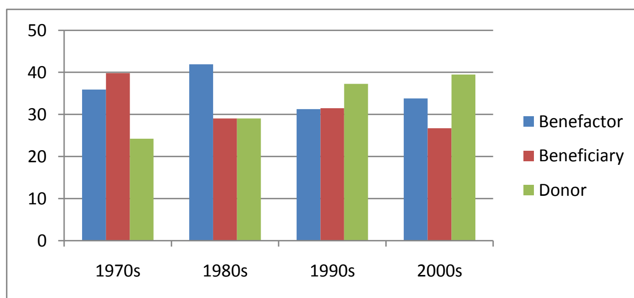

Figure 3: Proportion of actor representation per decade (percent)

To show the general time trend and not rely exclusively on decades as random categorizations, regression analysis for each category was carried out[2]. Figure 4 presents the time trend from 1972 to 2007, showing the proportional representation of each actor category for each year covered by the data set. In the time trend analysis, beneficiary frequency drops continuously and over the whole period decreases by 8 percentage points (from 32 to 24). Similarly, the benefactor category decreases by more than a third, with 15 percentage points (from 44 to 29). These developments echo the most remarkable change revealed by the time trend analysis, namely the substantial and incessant increase in the donor representation which amounts to a doubling, increasing by as much as 23 percentage points over the period (from 23 to 46).

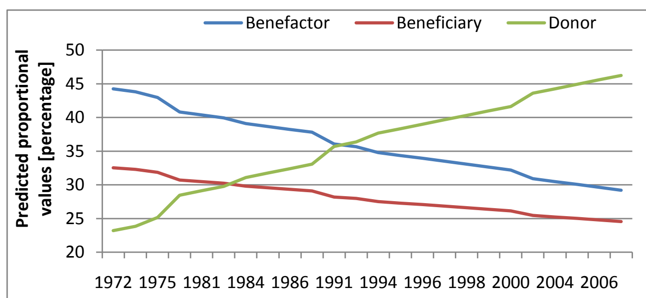

Figure 4: Time trend of actor distribution (actor proportions by year - OLS regression)

[2] Ordinary least squares regressional analysis. Dependent variable: actor proportion. Independent variable: year. (Tests for other types of relationships were performed but came out to be a linear relationship between time and actor proportion)

The substantial differences in actor proportion at different points in time suggest that significant discursive shifts are taking place during the period. The proportion by decade analysis and the regression analysis, differ on just one count, namely between the absolute values for beneficiary representation in the 1970s (figure 3) and the predicted values for beneficiary representation in the 1970s in the regression analysis (figure 4). The former analysis shows beneficiaries to be dominant, while due to the scarcity of data points in the 1970s (only 5 brochures) this is not the case in the regression analysis. The regression analysis does, however, show the 1970s to be the period with the highest degree of beneficiary representation. Consequently, I view the shifts in actor distribution as reflecting a shifting prioritization of the actors, from a relatively greater focus on beneficiaries in the 1970, across a greater focus on benefactors in the 1980s to finally a clear donor dominance in the 1990s and 2000s. In the following, I examine these developments as shifts between discourses which are, relatively speaking, beneficiary-oriented, benefactor-oriented and donor-oriented, and typical for the approximate periods of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990-2000s respectively.

ACTOR ARTICULATION ANALYSIS

In order to understand the sources and implications of the observed shifts in actor distribution, typical examples for each decade are analyzed with a particular focus on how each actor is discursively constructed. This is done with a view to identifying on the one hand, the type of legitimation these constructions are aimed at and, on the other hand, the kind of moral agency for donor publics that results from it. Two case brochures for each organization are analyzed, comparing and contrasting between decades and organizations. The case material includes Save the Children brochures from 1973 and 1980; Amnesty brochures from 1981 and 1996 and Red Cross brochures from 1995 and 2007.

THE BENEFICIARY-CENTERED LEGITIMACY OF THE 1970s

Legitimation by accountancy

A typical example of a 1970s brochure, in terms of the distribution of actors, is the 1973 Save the Children brochure: *Do you think your money no longer goes very far*.

)et kan virkelig
ıytte noget!

ıitiativet til at starte et pro-
kt til bekæmpelse af spe-
ılskheden i Indonesien,
yldes de meget opmun-
ende resultater, som RED
ARNET i snævert samar-
ıjde med WHO og UNICEF
ır opnået i de 2 centre Po-
ri og Aska i Indien.
Her blev der virkelig fort
vis for, at spedalskhed - i
or målestok - kan bringes
ıder kontrol ved anvendel-
! **enkle og billige behand-**
ıgs-metoder.
Ialt 36.109 ikke smittefar-
ge patienter har været un-
r fortsat behandling. Her-
' er 34.623 helbredt, mens
486 endnu er i behandling.
Ialt 4.877 smittefarlige pa-
enter har været i behand-
ng i mere end 5 år. Heraf
: 3.076 gjort negative, d.v.s.
ke smittefarlige, mens 1.801
er blevet mindre smittefar-
lige, men stadig må behand-
les.
Ved at reducere antallet
af smittebærere forebygger
man samtidig, at børn og
unge udsættes for smitte.
Gennemsnitlig er mere end
1000 indiske skolebørn om
dagen blevet undersøgt un-
der RED BARNET's hjæl-
peprogram.
Og det betyder igen 1000
skolebørn, der nu kan undgå
den frygtede spedalskhed,
som altid før resulterede i
invaliditet, isolering, fattig-
dom og en helt igennem
umenneskelig tilværelse.
Resultaterne fra Indien vi-
ser klart, at et forebyggende
arbejde, der gennemføres sy-
stematisk over en årrække,
kan bringe sygdommen un-
der kontrol.

POSTKVITTERING

Af

**Nu gælder det
Indonesien.**

å næste side kan De læse
ırfatteren Poul Ørums si-
'onsrapport fra Indone-
. . . . og om behovet for
jælp.
Her vil RED BARNET i
anmark, Norge og Sverige
ere med i en fællesindsats
od spedalskheden.
Det er til denne aktion, vi
eder om Deres hjælp.
Kun 30 kr. er nok til at
edde et barn. Til at sikre
en læge- og medicinalhjælp
er er selve livsbetingelsen
ır en fremtid.

GIRO indbetalingskort
Afsenderbetegnelse

Example 1: Danish Save the Children brochure 1973(extract)

As in most humanitarian brochures, all three humanitarian actors are represented, but the beneficiary is remarkably more prominent in this type of brochure than in later brochures and takes slight priority over the other two actors.

Leprosy can be controlled by applying simple and cheap procedures. A total of 36.109 non-contageous patients have been under continuous treatment. Of these, 34.623 are cured, while 1.486 are still under treatment. A total of 4.877 contagious patients have been under treatment for more than five years, Of these, 3.076 have been rendered negative – that is, non-contagious – while 1.801 are now less contagious but still undergoing treatment.

As the extract exemplifies, the beneficiary is represented in this brochure in the exact locations and numbers of children, who have been under treatment and cured of leprosy through Save the Children. There is no individualized representation of neither the beneficiaries nor their benefactors and as such, this brochure does not work to create affinity with the sufferers or those who help them. In the words of the brochure, the representation of the beneficiary serves as "evidence" that large scale leprosy can be "controlled", given "persistent" and "systematic" work. The representation of beneficiaries quantifies past achievements of Save the Children and testifies to the continued need for their efforts.

In Waimahu, 18 lepers, in Haiteriee Besar 30 lepers. In the school in Amahusa, 7 children have just been found to be infected. And so on so forth in the hundreds of Maluku campongs. How many more will be contaminated? One must expect ten to twenty children and adults for every thousand people. A horrifying amount were it not for the imminent Save the Children Campaign in Indonesia.

The objective and rational register of this type of beneficiary representation is emphasized by the newspaper layout of the brochure which adds to the construction of legitimacy through a report on quantified performance.

The brochure includes an eyewitness account from a well-known Danish novelist and while this account stands out in the material as an opportunity to create proximity through subjectivity, in fact it is not used for the purpose of affinity. The eyewitness accounts of his encounter with a beautiful landscape with charming inhabitants and thus employs a rather objectifying, colonialist gaze lending beneficiaries neither voice nor agency and maximizing rather than reducing distance (Silverstone 2006, Hall 2007). *"A quarter of a million? It cannot possibly be any of these, as healthy and round as they appear, as delightful to look at. The adults approach one with a trustful openness and sorrowless cheer.."*
This underscores the absence of effort to create affinity through singularization in the representation of the beneficiary. The donor address, however, does ask the potential donor to imagine a single child, to imagine the unmediated claim of suffering from one individual to another. *"Just how cheap it is, one realizes if just once faced with a child whose hands are crippling and on whose body leprosy has cast its shadows", "30 kroner to save a child – can you afford it?"* In this way, without helping to bridge the distance between the sufferer and the witness/potential donor, the brochure makes a claim to the fundamental morality of the one-on-one encounter with suffering. The appeal becomes moralizing, shaming the prosperous and self-absorbed member of audience, who does not respond to the basic moral demand of a child whose life is threatened.

The Save the Children brochure illustrates that in cases where the beneficiary is strongly represented, this tends to be not with a view to creating affinity with the sufferer, to help bridge the psychological, cultural and geographical distance between donors and beneficiaries. Rather, the strong representation of the beneficiary tends to be part of a legitimation by performance reporting discourse. This discourse is prominent in the beginning of the period investigated, roughly the 1970s, and subsequently disappears entirely from the humanitarian brochures.

THE BENEFACTOR-CENTERED LEGITIMACY OF THE 1980s

Legitimation by institutionalization

The benefactor, that is, the organization's self-representation, is relatively prominent throughout the period, albeit gradually declining. The 1985 brochure *'Save the Children needs new friends'* exemplifies the benefactor oriented discourse which characterizes brochures in the 1980s. In this brochure, contrary to the 1973 brochure above, the beneficiary is largely absent. The suffering is not substantiated or exemplified in any way but identified in a single phrase *".. millions of children continue to be in distress"*. While beneficiaries are obviously at the core of the organization's work, the context of this work is represented as a list of countries where the organization is active and its contents are articulated as *'health projects, vaccination programs and the building of institutions',* thus entirely nominalized and dehumanized. The donor is present in the text only through the options for action listed in the tick box of the return slip. Even the donor address itself *'become a Save the Children friend'* is disassociated from the cause, the children in need, and associated solely with the organization itself. The brochure provides no further motivation for action than to do as the celebrities, photos of which fill one of the brochure's four pages.

Rather than present the organization's cause, the suffering it strives to alleviate and provide the audience with reasons for action, this brochure exemplifies a focus on organizational self-representation which is typical of the 1980s brochure. The brochure is dedicated to insisting on the independence and impartiality of the organizations, elaborating on its '*apolitical*', '*nonreligious'* and '*private'* nature, its historical foundation on post-war needs and its practice of improving conditions for children *'regardless of nationality, race, color and religion'.* The text describes the organizational structure of Save the Children, its dependence on voluntary work and its international collaborations. Thus, it is evident that the primary role of this brochure is to present the organization as reliable and professional, while simultaneously not creating the impression of a bureaucratic body which is out of reach. In so doing, the brochure brackets out its humanitarian cause.

The same discourse is found in Amnesty's material during this period. Although Amnesty International has a tradition of providing case stories in all their material, they do so to a significantly lesser extent in the 1980s and exhibit the same benefactor orientation as illustrated above. The 1981 brochure *'Is it of any use'* exemplifies this. Similarly to the Save the Children text above, this brochure focuses on organizational structure and principles. It presents an effective grass roots organization with a strong public mandate, forefronting the organization's neutrality, apolitical nature and financial independence. The brochure goes to great lengths to insist on the non-bureaucratic nature of the organization and its almost exclusive dependence on voluntary work. Amnesty is not '*a large bureaucratic colossus with exquisite offices and expensive administrations around the world's metropolis. Amnesty is a housewife in Brovst, a doctor in Tønder, an office worker in Odense, a worker from Rødovre and you.."* The grass root discourse is emphasized by the very casual and spoken-language register of the text above and of the depiction of the organization's practice of denunciation: *"Governments, who think it is ok to imprison unwanted or difficult persons without a trial, without an explanation – are annoyed and angered by the thousands of letters they receive, asking what has become of this or the other person'*

Although Amnesty is arguably the more political of the three organizations in that it picks out and publicly shames perpetrators in the attempt to create structural changes, the discourse of the 1981 brochure is not one of denunciation. *Around the world over a million people are imprisoned. Afraid, forgotten and lonely. They need to know that they have not been forgotten, that they will not remain powerless and alone – but that there are people who will work for their release ... Amnesty International wants to do that. Do you want to join in?* Human rights, justice and indignation do not enter this discourse. Rather, the problem of prisoners of conscience is represented here as an emotional one - in the somewhat quotidian register of emotions, *'afraid, forgotten and lonely'*, recognizable to the audience and mirrored in the brochure image depicting the quiet despair of a man crouching on a prison bed.

The benefactor-centered discourse thus places its legitimation efforts in a frame of institutionalization. Rather than accounting for its performance and results, what seems to be at stake is the reliability of the organization, not least its

reliability as mediator in a field that is increasingly politicized and problematized as such. The political is excluded not only explicitly in the self-representation and implicitly in the depiction of action, but, as a consequence, also from the reasons for action that this type of brochure is able to offer. These reasons for action center on the psychological pain of the sufferers rather than their physical and structural causes.

THE DONOR-CENTERED LEGITIMACY OF 1990s and 2000s

Legitimation by compensation

The most remarkable development that the time trend analysis reveals, is the steady and substantial increase in the prioritization of the donor category over the course of the past 40 years. This shift reflects not only an increased but also a transformed preoccupation with the donor. In brochures which give less priority to the donor, its representation tends to be in terms of options for action. In the donor-centered material, however, options for action are in fact either reduced or back-grounded and replaced by a strong focus on reasons for action, which take the needs of the donor as their starting point. In the donor-centered brochures, the information about the organization which was so strongly in focus during the 1980s has fallen away entirely or is secluded to small print on the back page. Contrary to the institutionalizing nominalizations in the 1980 Amnesty brochure, in the 1996 brochure from Amnesty, the institutionalized nature of working procedures is suppressed behind a 'we': *'we go out, talk to the victims, families..', 'what we see and hear is collected into reports which we send to the governments of respective countries, press and important institutions'*, stressing the collectiveness of its activities but holding back any allusion to standards and procedures.

The heading '*We have some pictures you don't want to see…'* and *'some pictures you ought to see'* (Amnesty 1996) sets the frame for the discourse - and the dilemma- that dominates the donor appeal in the 1990s and 2000s. It points to the core problem of mediated suffering, namely that it is painful to be a powerless witness to distant suffering and most people would prefer to avoid the confrontation with it. Amnesty, in this statement, takes on the uncomfortable responsibility of bearing witness to the unbearable on behalf of the reader, but at

the same time opens up a discourse of responsibility or civic duty in the second statement *'some pictures you ought to see'*. This is the tension that characterizes the humanitarian discourse of the past 15-20 years; audiences' reluctance to respond to distant suffering which widely goes under the name of compassion fatigue and the moral imperative that humanitarian organizations represent and which to a smaller or greater extent is integral to the cultural fabric of the audience. The donor-centered discourse takes this tension as its point of departure and tries to offer the audience a solution to the dilemma it places them in. This discourse does not try to bridge the distance between sufferer and spectator, does not account for the work of the organization, nor commit to action having any impact on the physical reality of suffering. Rather, these brochures place their moral claim in an exchange-logic, where the focus is on offering the audiences something in return for their attention, their money and their moral discomfort. In the 2005 Red Cross brochure, reasons for action are centered on the moral benefit for the donor. *'There are many reasons to become a member. One of them is of course the satisfaction of knowing that the concern for fellow human beings is being transformed into concrete action'*. The motivation for action here is not tied to any form of 'making a difference' – in fact, nowhere in the brochure does the text commit to action having any kind of impact on beneficiaries at all. The impact of action here is on the donor. He is offered a moral benefit in return for his attention and money. In the 2010 brochure from Red Cross, the impact of the work of the organization on the reality of the benefactor is also omitted, but in this case the brochure offers the audience a consumer advantage, a deal, in exchange. These are two types of discourses, which, although very different as we shall see below, both frame the moral claim of suffering as something audiences must be compensated for, either in terms of a material reward or in terms a moral reward.

Legitimation by material compensation

The 2007 Danish Red Cross brochure 'Support Red Cross while on the phone' is an example of a branding partnership between a humanitarian and a commercial organization, in this case a telephone provider. The audience is offered the purchase of a red mobile phone and a subscription at moderate cost under the framing:

"The struggle to save lives never ends. Year round, the Danish Red Cross moves into emergencies all over the world. This work is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions and now you have an opportunity to support the aid work. At the same time you get a great offer. You receive a telephone for 101 kroner. From these, 100 go directly to the Danish Red Cross. At the same time you support the aid work with 24 kroner every month without extra cost to you"

The representation of the beneficiary is limited to a series of images of, mostly, smiling African and Asian children. The verbal text is equally shared between institutional information about the Red Cross and details about the 'deal' that is offered. The brochure exemplifies an exchange logic, where the traditional altruistic sacrifice is no longer required. The humanitarian organization simply outsources its brochure space to the commercial partner; The commercial partner buys advertising and branding value, the 'donor' buys a telephone with an invisible moral attribute, namely its relation to the Red Cross. With morality as the unique selling point in this type of advertising, both the 'donor' and the commercial partner purchase moral capital in the exchange. As sources of support for the humanitarian organization, neither is required to confront himself with the reality of distant suffering or the uncomfortable dilemmas and uncertainties associated with it.

Example 2: Danish Red Cross brochure 2007 (extract

Legitimation by moral compensation

The donor-centered discourse goes beyond providing options for action. It focuses on the donors' reasons for action, and implicitly, on potential donors' reasons to be reluctant about action. It engages with the emotional life of the donor, focusing on the effect of distant suffering and humanitarian appeal on their audience. Two themes of resistence underlie the discourse, namely the vanity of actions which leads to the construction of humanitarian action as a symbolic gesture and the vastness of suffering, which leads to the construction of humanitarian action as subjectivization

Humanitarian action as symbolic gesture

The 2005 Red Cross brochure *'Welcome to a global network'* exemplifies quite literally the construction of humanitarian action as symbolic gesture. Rather than accounting for the work undertaken by the organization, the brochure includes a lengthy discussion of the symbol of the Red Cross and the psychological significance of this symbol. Part of this discussion reads '*the Red Cross is also the sign for among other things your concern for victims and political prisoners who suffer in the hidden, without the attention of the surrounding world'*. If suspicion of claims about impact abounds, be it the impact of the individual donor's actions or those of the humanitarian organization, a frequently used alternative is to resort to the symbolic value of action. In the Red Cross brochure, the sign of the red cross refers not only to the work of the organization and the hope it installs in sufferers, but also to the care of the donors behind the organization. This care, the emotional state of the donor and the significance of his care to the beneficiary itself is brought center stage in the appeal; *For them it means a lot to know that people in happier circumstances have concern for them*'. If the audience suspects that mediated action always stays within the realm of representation and have doubts that humanitarian organizations have more than a fleeting influence on the social world, the donor may be left with the perception that his feelings of outrage, compassion or empathy in fact cannot be transformed into a changed reality for the sufferers. Such skepticism seems reflected in the donor-centered appeal's reference to the importance of the concern itself, the suggestion that simply by caring, we can make a difference to those who suffer.

Humanitarian action as subjectivization

The mere vastness of suffering that audiences are confronted with via the media is a challenge for humanitarian organizations, who must find ways to make audiences feel some sense of responsibility for the particular instances of suffering, which constitutes their cause. In addition, mediation also renders numerous the witnesses to the suffering and in this way it becomes impossible to single out responsibility; responsibility to whom and by whom. The moral compensation discourse addresses this problem, articulated as an issue of anonymity. The 2005 Red Cross brochure acknowledges the problem '*Like you are much more than a membership number, so the people in a refugee camp are more than a mere statistic. They have names and histories'* indicating that it is not only the anonymity of the sufferers that is at issue, but also the anonymity of the audience as a mass of donors, whose stake in and value to the cause is merely defined by their financial contribution. The Amnesty 1996 brochure addresses the same need to single out the donor as an individual: '*as an Amnesty member you will still hear about violence, suppression, and genocide and maybe still feel powerless and insignificant in this world we live in. But you will be one of more than a million ordinary people throughout the world, who make an effort to protect human rights*. When offering to de-anonymize the sufferers, however, Amnesty does this by reference to the individual's relation to them: '*You will know some of the victims. They will no longer be part of a big anonymous mass. They will be people with faces, names, families, jobs and lives'*. The donor-centered discourse thus holds no attempt to discursively preempt the anonymity that it addresses by trying to bridge the distance between sufferer and witness, as it might have done by providing '*faces, names, families, jobs and lives'*. What the absence of such efforts seems to indicate is that the objective of this discourse is not so much to establish a relation, an affinity, but rather to offer members of audience the opportunity to step out of the mass and come into being as acting subjects.

In conclusion, the discourse of moral compensation introduces a new focus on the donor not only in terms of prominence, but even more so, in terms of the subject position it constructs. Where previously the donor was represented primarily in terms of options for action, this new donor-centered discourse engages with his presumed emotional response to distant suffering. This is not a

sentimental discourse of compassion, indignation, shame or narcissism, but a meta-discourse, which thematizes its audiences' response to appeals, presumed feelings of inefficacy, inadequacy and indignity when faced with suffering that is outside of their immediate realm of action. The reasons for action that grow out of this discourse are centered on the ability of the humanitarian organization to render subjects out of its audience, to provide them with moral agency. The trajectory of the humanitarian appeal over the past 40 years, then, can be construed as a movement from an appeal that simulates the unmediated confrontation with suffering and asks the audience to imagine the singular suffering - as-if confronted with it face to face - to a form of appeal that asks the members of audience to imagine themselves as singularized, as moral subjects with the ability to make a difference in the world. Rather than committing to relieve the suffering of distant others, these types of appeals, then, offer to relieve the moral suffering of the humanitarian audience. This is not an entirely homogenous trajectory, however. An alternative compensation discourse exists, which has abandoned the claim to any kind of relation between sufferers and donors altogether and legitimates its demand instead by material compensation.

NEGOTIATING THE RELATION TO THE PUBLIC

Although the beneficiary is given low priority overall, the time trend analysis shows a somewhat greater attention to the beneficiary in the 1970s than later in the period. This, however, does not testify to a greater tendency to create legitimacy through affinity. The greater attention to the beneficiary, on the contrary, belongs to a legitimacy-by-accountancy discourse, where the beneficiary is represented as quantifications of the performance of the organization. The brochure material suggests that in this period, legitimacy was constructed by accounting for the effectiveness of the organization's work in absolute and strictly local terms, suggesting that the organization's authority and the appropriateness of its objectives were to a great extent taken for granted. In subsequent years, the performance reports are marginalized and in most brochures completely omitted. With the decrease in representation of the beneficiary, in the 1980s a new discourse gains prominence, namely the legitimation-by-institutionalization discourse. A focus on the institutional nature of organizational practices, entirely absent from the earlier material, develops, making explicit organizational structure, mandate, procedures and ideology. The

discussed erosion of trust offers an explanation of the abandonment of the accountancy discourse, suggesting that the predicative powers of mediated communication have weakened and undermined the authority of the humanitarian text to such an extent that the humanitarian organization can no longer obtain legitimacy for itself and its cause exclusively by reference to its performance. The introduction of the institutional discourse testifies not only to the need to speak from a position of professionalized ethos, but indicates also a new concern with the organization as representative. This points in the direction of a destabilization and beginning negotiation of the relation between the humanitarian organization and the public.

The remarkable increase in donor representation throughout the period is a reflection of the relation between the humanitarian organization and the public coming under scrutiny. Still greater priority is given to the representation of the donor, not only in terms of options for action but to a much greater extent in terms of reasons for action, which played no significant part in the material from the 1970s and 1980s. In confronting the problem of reasons for action, there emerges a marked tendency to direct attention to problems associated with the mediation of suffering and the moral dilemmas of the distant witness, her sense of inefficacy and moral discomfort. The legitimation-by-compensation discourse which dominates the material of the past 20 years, rather than committing to making a change in the social reality of beneficiaries, focuses on this moral discomfort and offers the donor a benefit in exchange for his donation, in the shape either of relief of his moral suffering or in the shape of a consumer advantage. In this way, the problem of trust that can be argued to haunt humanitarian organizations prohibits them from taking it upon themselves to lay out the reasons for action that underlie their own work, their ideological foundation and raison d'etre and instead

NEGOTIATING THE RELATION TO BENEFICIARIES

While the beneficiary dominates the visual contents of the brochure at all times, this figure has relatively low linguistic representation overall and representations of the beneficiary are very rarely located in any kind of geo-political or psychological context. As we have seen, the imagery of Amnesty International is distinguished from the imagery of the other two organizations by means of case

photos which are associated with linguistic accounts of the stories behind them, names, places and causes made explicit. Such case stories are literally non-existent in Save the Children material and in the Red Cross material only a few such cases emerge in the 2000s. Further, only Amnesty International makes use of an embedded subjective point of view, often giving the beneficiaries themselves voice, or providing eye-witness accounts which bridge the psychological distance between donors and beneficiaries.

Beneficiary account	**Eye-witness account**
"For years I was locked up in a tiny little cell. My only contact with other human beings was with my torturers. For more than two years, I did not see a human face, a green leaf… On Christmas eve, the door to my cell opened and the guard threw in a crumpled piece of paper. On it were the words: 'Constantino, do not lose faith, we know you are alive'. It was signed 'Monica' and written on Amnesty International stationary. Those words saved my life and my sanity." Letter from a released prisoner to Amnesty International	"Their accounts are remarkably similar – terrible beatings, slashings while hanging from the wrists, disclothing and hooding, naked exposure to extreme cold, nude exhibition in front of female guards, sexual degradation by male and female interrogators, sexual abuse (anal penetration) placement in painful postures for many hours." Notes from an American lawyer after meeting with Kuwaiti prisoners in Guantanamo, January 2005

This type of representation of suffering provides documentation for need and impact. In the case of the beneficiary account in particular it also serves to create affinity with the sufferer through psychological identification. Outside of these types of accounts from Amnesty, depictions of the psychological and physical reality of suffering are extremely rare in the material. Such depictions could be found in the early 60s, but subsequently have vanished from the brochure material.

"This little girl is unhappy. Maybe she is hungry – or maybe disaster and misery have been too staining for her little child's mind. It must be difficult for a mother or a father that they cannot give their child enough to eat ir get medical care if it is ill.
Yet there are millions if children in the world who must do without that which we take for granted. We cannot help them all, but we can contribute in union with many others who also want to help.
Nothing good ever came from need and misery and those children who grow up under such circumstances will, when they grow up, share the world with our children.
If we fight need, we give the next generation the possibility to create something better than the world we live in today." (Save the Children 1962)

Instead, in brochures of the past 40 years, the organization's cause is depicted as context for the work of the organization rather than the other way around.

"one of the areas where the need is currently the greatest is in Africa. Here, Save the Children has worked since 1967 and the need- and thereby the help – is growing. Last time around it was mostly about emergency relief, but long term projects have not become less important and Save the Children contribute to projects which are to help villagers stay in their homes whereby the streams of hunger refugees is lessened or – hopefully – stopped and child mortality drops." (Save the Children 1986)

It only takes a moment to change a whole life. In a manner of minutes, great parts of the population of Bhuj in Northern India lost everything in an earth quake.
In the town Goma in Congo, an erupting volcano in a manner of hours rendered half a million people homeless.
Even though there is a year and a continent between these two events, they have something in common. In both cases, emergency workers and volunteers from the red cross were on location within hours" (Red Cross 2004)

Very little information about the specificities of the causes that the organizations adopt are included in the brochure. Elaborations on the nature of the suffering, its context, causes and consequences are scarce as are particulars regarding the

character of the need. As a consequence, the suffering and the need behind particular humanitarian initiatives tends to be represented in the abstract, leaving no large differences between the legitimation of otherwise quite dissimilar causes and organizations. In other words, it seems to be a general characteristic of humanitarian organizations – at all times, but increasingly so in recent years - that in striving to legitimate themselves, they draw on a rather general and abstract notion of humanitarian need. While this may be so because of the need to enact the basic universalist ethic of all sufferers being equally worthy, as a consequence, when pressure for humanitarian organizations to differentiate themselves increases, they must find ways of doing so not on the basis of the nature of their work, their cause, but on the basis of something else.

It is a striking finding from the examination of 40 years of brochures from three humanitarian organizations that suffering plays such a small part. Attempts to legitimate humanitarian action through the creation of affinity of one kind or another between the audience and potential donor are extremely limited. To the extent that affinity creation is attempted it is almost exclusively in imagery and even here the physical reality of suffering is absent, beneficiaries instead represented in 'positive imagery', with smiling children, facing the camera, as if lifted out of their misery. Operating outside of affective registers of compassion, indignation, disgust, guilt and shame, these are images which create affinity by allowing the audience to recognize themselves and the humanity they share with the beneficiary and which, in so doing, suppress the – potentially alienating and dehumanizing –differences, which position the audience as benefactors and the portrayed as beneficiaries at their mercy.

One can only speculate as to the reasons why material from Red Cross and Save the Children is devoid of context for their causes and virtually devoid of suffering. Two likely explanations spring to mind. First, keeping depictions of suffering within the realm of the psychological renders them recognizable for the audience, thus facilitating identification rather than alienation as the physical reality of suffering might do. It backgrounds the difference between recipients and audiences, but in backgrounding difference it by necessity simultaneously backgrounds the very reasons for the humanitarian organizations' work. Second, by including scenes or symbols of war and devastation, humanitarian

organizations run the risk of entering the political realm, inviting questions about the veracity or feasibility of the humanitarian principle of apoliticality. The fact that Amnesty International, a human rights organization whose practices are overtly more political, stands out by systematically including context in visuals as well as language, corroborates this explanation.

While the relative absence of suffering in representations of the beneficiary are characteristic not only of recent years but equally of the 1970s and 1980s, as we have seen, in terms of visual representation the figure of the beneficiary is being renegotiated in the 1990s and 2000s. Both Amnesty International and Red Cross are abandoning representations of beneficiaries as passive recipients, empowering them in Amnesty's case by introducing protest and in the case of Red Cross by including male figures in a landscape that was previously occupied exclusively by women and children. .. criticism which is both about discursive practices and non-discursive ones. It is a response to .. degrading and condensating and mirrors also skepticism as to the utility of humanitarian aid which, according to skeptics' discourse pours endless resources into populations who do little to help themselves.

DISCUSSION

From the examination of 40 years of humanitarian brochure material, it emerges that it is not and has never been, the suffering of the distant other which is used to legitimate the humanitarian cause in this genre, most likely due to the prioritization of identification and apoliticality. Reluctance to depict suffering today, then, cannot be ascribed simply to increased mediatization and compassion fatigue. It precedes these cultural phenomena and is a problem which is bound to the process of mediation itself.

Legitimation discourse does, however, increasingly oust the beneficiary in both visual and verbal modalities, first to the advantage of self-representation and later to the advantage of the donor. While the visual in recent years shows indications of a renegotiation of the relationship to beneficiaries, endowing them with a new empowerment, the verbal instead focuses on empowering the donor.

In this way, each modality addresses a separate skepticism, that of humanitarian action being colonialist and patronizing, and that of audiences being powerless and fatigued. This mistrust in the motivation and effectiveness of humanitarian action is addressed not by trying to reinstall trust in the authority of humanitarian organizations to determine where, how and why to help sufferers but by nurturing the symbolic relations between the humanitarian participants on a moral dimension rather than pragmatic one. There is a certain sense in which the ploy to empower both donors and beneficiaries contribute to the same movement away from a discourse that is centered on the asymmetric power relation between beneficiaries and donors. By offering donors reasons for action that are self-oriented and little to do with having an impact on the lives of others, the compensation discourse removes humanitarian legitimation from patronization. In this very move, however, the relation between donors and beneficiaries becomes instrumental, beneficiaries objects in donors' utilitarian projects. In addition, the endeavor to discursively do away with power asymmetry entails a glossing over also of the resource asymmetry, which is the very reason d'etre for humanitarian action, and the locus of the political with its potential for durable social change.

The development in humanitarian discourse that we have seen in the brochure material testifies to a troublesome negotiation of relations, which responds to skepticism and mistrust in audiences. It is noteworthy that the response to audience demands is so pronounced even in the brochure genre, where the medium allows elaborations and explications to a greater extent than perhaps any other humanitarian genre, and where the text is not embedded in another medium with its own conventions and demands, as for instance the TV-spot or newspaper advert. Due to the increasing attention to audience demands and reasons for action, the brochures gradually move closer to the genre of persuasion.

CONCLUSION

Examining the brochures, whose purpose, at least in part, is to legitimate the humanitarian organization vis-a-vis the general public and potential donors, it

becomes clear that the core aspects of legitimacy as defined in the NGO literature - performance and accountability – have gradually become irrelevant over the past 20-30 years. While in the 1970s performance accounting appears to be crucial to what is expected to count as legitimate, reporting on performance in later years takes very low priority and reference or even allusions to accountability standards vanish. The reason for this discrepancy can be ascribed to the observation that legitimation efforts in relation to the general public and potential donors appear to center on the organization's claim to the role of representative for the Western public, a claim whose basis shifts in the course of the 40 years from predominantly pragmatic legitimation to moral legitimation, qualified on the basis of either performance or institutionalization in the first case, and compensation in the latter. One way of understanding this development is that trust is gradually written out of humanitarian legitimation strategies. The logic of the brochures is no longer to get legitimacy from the work they do in places of need. The discourse that NGOs have employed in the past 20 years marks a distinct break with such legitimation. According to the NGO literature what is distinctly new in NGO legitimacy these years is accountability vis-à-vis recipients/beneficiaries and an ensuing demand for focus on the NGO as the beneficiaries' representative. While traces of such a shift can be found in the empowered representations of beneficiaries, the brochures, however, testify to what could be argued to be an opposite tendency, namely an increased focus on the NGO as the donor's representative.

I have argued that what drives the development from performance through institutionalization to compensation-based legitimation is a wading of public trust to which the humanitarian organizations are subject. The incorporation of audience demands to a great extent grows out of mediatization through the requirement to compete for public attention and recognition in a crowded public sphere, just like mediatization is a crucial factor in the development of the public distrust itself. Through this relationship, mediatization results in two paradoxes: First, in the quest for visibility, the identity of the organization in fact falls out of sight. Although the moral agency of the donor comes to play a central role in recent years' humanitarian communication, the ideology and morality that the organizations represent do not. As we have seen, ultimately the consequence of the adaptation to public distrust is that humanitarian organizations refrain from

taking a stance and assuming the role as moral educators, leaving their proposals for engagement with distant suffering in a moral vacuum (on the notion of moral education in the media, see Chouliaraki 2008). Second, the desire to steer away from patronizing representation, potentially objectifies beneficiaries and renders the relation apolitical. These profound effects of mediatization on humanitarian organizations cannot be understood fully without paying attention to the dialectic relationship between organization, media and the public, which mediation involves.

Needless to say, reasons for changes in humanitarian discourse over the past 40 years are multifold. Changes in political climate and wider governance structures have an impact on what is considered legitimate just like broader processes of globalization, commercialization and individualization affect the practices of humanitarian institutions in numerous ways. This paper, however, points out the profound effects on humanitarian organizations of having to navigate a mediatized landscape of distrust in their attempts to position themselves as legitimate representatives for the Western public in engaging with distant suffering.

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Humanitarian Appeal and the Paradox of Power

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Humanitarian organizations have in the past 10 years enjoyed immense public support with their Western publics. At the same time, however, the humanitarian sector is under increasing pressure from various sources, under scrutiny for its administration costs, its marketized practices, its alleged politicization. Some say that humanitarianism is in crisis. This paper examines the development of humanitarian advertising through analysis of 124 newspaper ads published in the period from 1970 to 2005. Using a discourse analytical approach which combines institution analysis with multimodal text analysis, it draws out the most marked changes that can be observed in the mode of appeal employed during this period, with a view to understanding the impact of the changing conditions of existence of humanitarian organizations on their public appeal. The paper exposes an increasing submission of humanitarian organizations to external demands, in terms of their choice of beneficiaries for public attention and in terms of the symbolic relations they set up between donors and beneficiaries.

INTRODUCTION

> *"Humanitarianism used to seem so simple: picture an African child standing on a parched plain, a sack of food aid behind him offering the promise of life and hope. Now, the new image is more complex and fragmented: children as perpetrators, as well as victims, of violence; soldiers as relief workers; well-educated, urban Europeans as well as African farmers lined up for relief assistance; and mounting allegations that, far from helping, relief aid is actually making things worse"* (Macrae 2000:87)

The humanitarian sphere today is characterized by new uncertainties and increasing diversity in terms of the definition of its objectives. The cultural and political environment of humanitarian organizations have changed considerably in the past 30 years and these changes are having profound impacts on the organizations' mode of operation not least in relation to donor publics – changes that seem to be intensifying these years. Starting with the humanitarian disaster in Biafra (now part of Nigeria) in the early 1970s, the humanitarian sector began to gradually expand (Macrae 2000) and has now become an immensely competitive field and a 'multi-billion dollar business' (Anthony 2010). The increasing competition in the sector is an important part of the reason why mass communication has become progressively more central to the operations of humanitarian organizations for mobilizing funds, for securing support and legitimacy for their operations and for raising awareness.

The mass-media outlets of humanitarian organizations are many and diverse. As donor publics we encounter them in the news, in brochures, in TV and newspaper ads, in public space, on their websites and, increasingly, in various forms of social media. Each of these genres has its own characteristics, determined by the affordances, conventions and institutional embedding of the medium, and consequently each genre plays out the identity of the organization, its goals, practices and beliefs in different ways. Common to all, however, is that while projecting the organization's identity, humanitarian communication simultaneously enacts, consolidates and potentially transforms attitudes and dispositions from the environment of which they are part, sometimes but not always strategically so.

Due to the fierce competition for media visibility and public attention with various other actors and interests, humanitarian organizations strategically adopt attitudes and communication formats with a view to optimizing 'mediability'. This mediatization of the humanitarian sphere has profound implications for the legitimacy of the sector and is the nodal point from which diverse critique and intractable dilemmas spring. First, humanitarian organizations find themselves in a schism between professionalism and grassroots activism. Professionalized practices are denounced as calculating and driven by self-interest rather than altruism, while grassroots activism is scorned for being naïve, romantic, unworldly and inefficient (Hopgood 2006, Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004). Second, humanitarian organizations find themselves in a dilemma between what we might call aesthetics and ethics, where prioritizing the effectiveness and breadth of their public appeal is rebuked for

compromising the moral integrity of the organization and its relationship to recipient populations (Tester 2010, Moeller 1999, Chouliaraki 2010, Cottle & Nolan 2007). A third set of tensions exist between humanity-based and utilitarian understandings of the role of humanitarian organizations, tensions which to a great extent revolve around perceptions of humanitarian action - aid and, in particular, development – as futile; and altruism as perpetuating helplessness, investments that obey a market-logic leading to more sustainable economic development as well as more dignified relations between populations of developing and developed countries (Schultz 2009, Abelson 2000). Finally, humanitarian organizations are increasingly caught in a quandary between neutrality and politicization, where such diverse factors as the nature of modern wars and new funding conditions are pushing organizations away from long-established non-partisan practices toward closer relations to governments and practices of denunciation (Rieff 2002, Slim 2003, Darcy 2004, Nelson and Dorsey 2003). These co-existing and mutually contradictory discourses collide and magnify in mediated representations of and from humanitarian organizations and pose a significant threat to the legitimacy of the individual organization as well as the sector as a whole.

The purpose of this article is to examine the genre of the humanitarian newspaper ad with a view to understanding how organizational identity and the humanitarian call for action are negotiated in the encounter with the newspaper medium and the newspaper public. The first section of the article explores the stable characteristics of the genre and the second examines which changes can be identified in the period from 1970 to today. In the following, after a brief introduction to the method used in the paper, an analytical vocabulary for describing the semiotic appeal devices, of which the genre makes use, is developed. Subsequently, I identify three marked loci of change in the genre over the course of the past 40 years, which I discuss and theorize as reflections of shifts in power relations: increasing power to the news media (*'Humanitarian appeals and agenda setting'*), to beneficiaries (*'The beneficiary and new modes of representation')* and to donors (*'The donor and new modes of action'*). Finally, I discuss how these three themes of change, although driven by different mechanisms, come about as the result of the lack of autonomy of humanitarian organizations and result in the surrender of their moral authority and professional expertise.

METHOD

Humanitarian organizational identity is conceptualized as constituted by the relations of the organization to beneficiaries and donor publics. In order to understand how this identity is constructed, I draw on the notion of mediation, which posits a relationship of mutual constitution between practices of mediated communication and identity (Chouliaraki & Morsing 2009). Following Chouliaraki's Analytics of Mediation, I view the process of mediation as constituted by the processes of hypermediacy and immediacy (Chouliaraki 2006). The analysis of *hypermediacy* seeks to assess how media as technology and institution participates in the social process of mediation and how, in so doing it shapes the encounter between donor and beneficiary. How is the institutional embedding of the ad reflected in the structure of the appeal? How do the affordances of these media and the conventions of the genres bear upon the construction of humanitarian identities? The analysis of hypermediacy in humanitarian ads has a semiotic and a thematic dimension. The semiotic description involves a mapping out of the discursive resources drawn upon in the genre of the humanitarian newspaper ad. The thematic description maps out the geographical distribution of beneficiaries for whom ads appeal. These two dimensions are mapped onto a timeline in order to suggest a correlation between institutional dependence and semiotic constitution in the humanitarian ad.

The analytical concept of *immediacy* seeks to assess how appeals establish connectivity through their particular ways of representing beneficiaries and donors, as if natural and objective. The analysis of representation is performed through multimodal discourse analysis with a particular interest in constructions of affinity and agency as key devices in overcoming distance. The notion of *affinity* refers to the promotion of a sense of kinship, with a view to extending audiences' sense of responsibility to distant localities. The notion of *agency* refers to the promotion of a sense of efficacy on the part of the audience, the feeling that it is in their power to act upon social reality in such a way as to contribute to its transformation. To investigate shifts in representations of the beneficiary, three ads which make use of the same iconography of suffering from the 1980s, the 1990s and the 2000s are compared and contrasted. To investigate shifts in the constructions of the donor, two functionally equivalent ads from the 1970s and 1990s are contrasted to show essential differences in the modes of action they enable.

DATA DESCRIPTION

The data consists of appeal ads from humanitarian organizations printed in the Danish national newspaper Politiken during the period from 1970 to 2005. As the interest of this paper is on humanitarian appeals, only ads which include a call for action are included[1]. For every fifth year in the period, all ads from the three case organizations printed in the news paper were collected. Due to the relative scarcity of ads from 1970 to 1990 – indeed no ads from the three case organizations are found in 1970 and 1975 – ads from all humanitarian organizations are included in the data set from 1970 to 1990[2]. The resulting dataset consists of 124 news paper ads unevenly distributed between organizations and years, as shown in the table below (Figure 1). Unsurprisingly, the use of advertising intensifies markedly from 1970 to 1995, where it appears to stabilize.

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
total	4	1	4	13	11	36	23	32
Red Cross			1	3		17	12	20
Amnesty				5			2	
Save the Children					1	14		3
Collaboration	1	1		3	9	5	9	9
Other	3		3	2	1			

Figure 1: Number of humanitarian ads in Politiken per sample year

GENRE DESCRIPTION

The humanitarian newspaper ad is to a large extent used for fundraising purposes as opposed to e.g. volunteer and member recruitment, awareness raising or simply branding. Across the period, 68% of the ads provide making a donation as only option for action, and this varies very little between years. The remaining ads are primarily associated with events, calling for participation (e.g. in a collect) or attendance (e.g. to a show). Although the genre is functionally homogenous, the news paper ad ranges from the minimal expression of the small rubric ad, simply mentioning a geographical location and an account number, to semiotically complex compositions of image, graphics and linguistic text. The composition of the ad is, obviously, designed according to its need to attract attention and convey its message to audiences in passing and so images and large font headings take spatial priority with limited linguistic text, averaging around 50 words.

[1] 27 humanitarian ads were not included in the data set due to not including a direction for action or not pertaining to distant suffering (eg. Domestic work by Danish Red Cross).

[2] In retrospect, for consistency the data set should have included the 'other' category for the whole period. Their absence, however, is unlikely to affect the results.

Two appeal dimensions structure the ad material. I use the term *incitement* to refer to a rational appeal dimension which corroborates the appeal by adding further information about the cause and the term *enticement* to refer to an emotional dimension, which aims to stir the moral impulse of the audience, by alluding to reasons to act or, most frequently, reasons not to not act. In 'incitement' the appeal is corroborated with factual, contextual information. This persuasive mode is enacted through blocks of text substantiating the cause of the appeal or the organization's efforts or prerequisites to alleviate it. The substantiations are of four types, either describing (mostly quantifying) the extent of a crisis, the immediate cause of a crisis, derived effects of a familiar crisis or remedies needed for assistance.

Incitement types	**Example text**
Extent	10.000 children died from famine yesterday. We fear that the number is just as big today. What about tomorrow? (Save the Children, 1980)
Cause	It is drought which is causing the famine. Drought is particularly serious this year. The crops are destroyed. All supplies have been used. (Red Cross, 1980)
Consequence	73.000 died, three million became homeless. Those who survived were lucky. First time around, that is. Now another disaster lurks. This time the threat comes from the winter and coldness which is descending over the mountainous earthquake region. (Red Cross 2005)
Remedy	It is still disasterously dry in Africa. We cannot make it rain, but we can help dig and drill for water. Help us provide a future for the disaster-stricken. (Red Cross 1985)

Figure 2: Incitement types

I use 'enticement' to refer to the emotional persuasive dimension of an appeal which promotes action by stirring the moral impulse of audiences. Enticement is typically evoked by means of a heading, subheading or image – that is, the perceptually most salient modalities. While incitement, as described above, can be said to legitimate the cause, the worthiness of the benefactor, enticement conversely more or less explicitly addresses reasons for audiences to take action. Enticements revolve around two key themes, namely *agency* and *affinity*. Attempts to persuade donors are oriented either around the possibility for action, persuading the audience that they do indeed have the power to act in such a manner as to affect the circumstances of suffering others, or they are oriented around *affinity*, focusing on persuading audiences that the suffering involved is within their scope of care and responsibility. Interestingly however, the majority of the explicit enticement devices address audiences' presumed

reasons *not* to take action and so rather than persuading by providing audiences with reasons to act, these ads can be understood as aiming to persuade by disarming audiences' defense strategies.

Under the general themes of *agency* and *affinity*, the linguistic enticements are organized around four topoi. In the topos of distance, persuasion focuses on reducing the geographical and/or psychological distance between the audience and the donor and addresses reluctance to act based on the idea that the suffering is remote, and action therefore irrelevant or futile. In the topos of sacrifice, reluctance to act based on the perception that the member of audience does not have the necessary resources to alleviate suffering is addressed. In this topos, allusions to audiences' disproportionate wealth are often made, inscribing the appeal into a discourse of guilt. In the topos of resignation, the emotionally involved, but passive spectator is addressed, where inaction is construed not as a choice based on reservations as in the previous topoi, but as a non-choice, a mechanical resignation to status quo. Finally, in the topos of identification audiences are encouraged to put themselves in the position of the sufferer and act on the basis of empathy.

Enticement topoi	**Example text**
Distance	We are the nearest to help
Identification	What would you say if your 14-year old disappeared?
Sacrifice	Kasanga can be kept alive for 95 kr. Can you afford that?
Resignation	Compassion is not enough/Do it now. Or you won't do it at all

Figure 3: Enticement topoi

Imagery is in rare cases used as an incitement device when graphical representations of expenditure of resources are displayed - typically to show the organization's administration to fieldwork-ratio. By far the dominant use of imagery is for enticement. Images may serve to cultivate a sense of *agency* by portraying representatives from the organization working in the field, as the donor's extended hand. The dominant enticement mode is *affinity*, however, which is promoted by showing beneficiaries whose presence may lay a demand on us by evoking our sense of responsibility.

Newspaper appeals variously draw on these relatively limited persuasive resources, making up four basic types of newspaper appeals: Appeals that use neither

incitement nor enticement (*notifications*), appeals that use both (*pleas*) and appeals that use either incitement or enticement alone (*requests, calls*).

Appeals that use neither incitement nor enticement function simply as *notifications*, pointers to either specific contemporary emergencies, assumed to be common knowledge to the audiences (rubric ads), or to events organized in support of a given cause (event ads). As much as 69% of the complete dataset are such *notifications*. They appear in the rubric sections of the paper, are black and white, moderately sized and of basic and highly standardized layout. The content of *notifications* is limited to mentioning the geographical location of an emergency and providing an account or telephone number for donations, along with an imperative (eg. *Help Bosnia, Support the victims in Chechnya*). *Notifications* make out by far the majority of the ads in the dataset.

Pleas, ads which make use of both incitement and enticement, constitute 14% of the data. These are predominantly ads which display a photo-image of beneficiaries, a heading which emphasizes the enticement of this image and a modest incitement text which substantiates the cause.

Requests, ads which provide only incitement without making use of enticement make out 13% of the ads. In the *request* appeal, images and headings often present some sort of enigma or question which may provoke curiosity. The incitement of this type of ad tends to be more elaborate than any of the other types and, in the data set, all appeals of the request type are a-historical, relating to principled causes rather than contemporary crises as we saw in the notifications.

Calls, finally, are ads which use only enticement, that is, ads which do not substantiate their appeal with information about the cause. *Call* appeals are rarer, making out only 4 % of the total dataset. In the dataset, all *calls* are full-page ads raising funds for natural disasters, consisting exclusively in an image, a heading and a logo.

	No enticement	**Enticement**
No incitement	Notification 69%	Call 4%
Incitement	Request 13%	Plea 14%

Figure 4: Overall distribution of ad types in dataset

Example 1:Notification: Help the Victims in Chechnya. Danish Red Cross, 1990

Example 2: Plea: We are the nearest to help.
Red Cross, Save the Children and DanChurchAid, 1995

HUMANITARIAN APPEALS AND AGENDA SETTING

Looking at appeal types over time, the incitement types and enticement topoi drawn upon are stable. There is, however, a marked development in the extent to which the ads make use of these persuasive devices (see figure 5). Until 1985, the most common ad type was the 'plea' - appeals that make use of both incitement and enticement. As these types of appeals dramatically decrease between 1980 and 1985, there is a brief surge of appeals which have done away with enticements but still provide incitement, that is, give some amount of information about the appeal's cause. In the meanwhile, there is a steady and robust increase in the use of notification ads, which from 1995 account for around 80% of all newspaper appeals. These are simple notifications providing information about an event – typically a collect, or a show – or rubric ads which, in a highly standardized format, point to a current humanitarian emergency and provide an account number for donations.

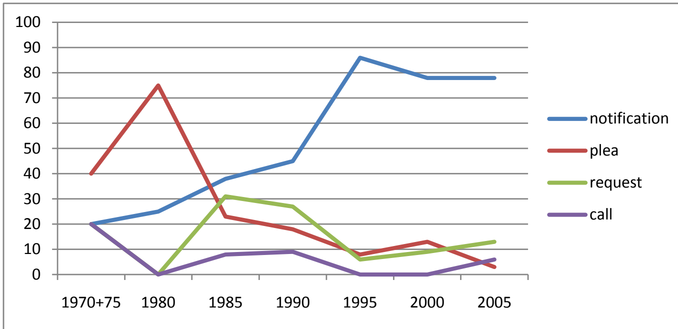


Figure 5: proportion of ad types per sample year (%)

The vast increase in appeal ads of the notification type corresponds to a parallel increase in ads which elicit donations for specific humanitarian emergencies. As figure 6 below shows, the proportion of emergency ads, which dropped drastically in 1980, subsequently climbed from 25% in 1980 to 92% in 1995 and 88% in 2005. This indicates that ads which deal with development disappear just like ads that raise funds for general purposes, recruit volunteers or serve a more general branding purpose become very few and far between. Further, until 1985 all emergency ads were accompanied with some amount of persuasive devices, but as the amount of emergency ads increases, the tendency to attach contextual information to them decreases.

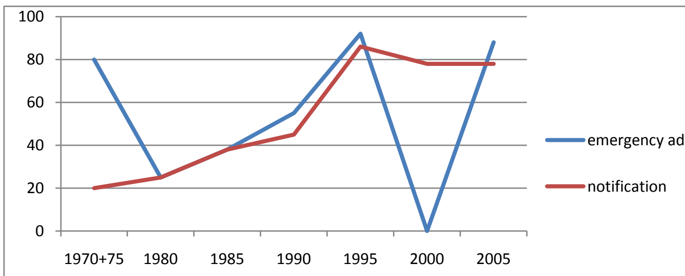


Figure 6: proportion of emergency ads and notification ads per sample year(%)

In addition, the dispersion of emergencies that are targeted is highly limited, as shown in figure 7. In the 1980s every single emergency ad served the purpose of eliciting donations for relief work in 'Africa'. In the 1990s ads were overwhelmingly

targeting relief efforts in Eastern Europe. Every single one of the 33 emergency ads published in Politiken in 1995 targeted Eastern Europe and in 2005, 22 of 28 emergency ads were concerned with South/South-East Asia: the 2005 Tsunami at the beginning of the year and the Kashmir earthquake in Pakistan towards the end of the year.

	1970-75	**1980**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**
Number of emergency ads	4	1	5	7	33	0	28
Africa	25%	100%	100%	15%			20%
East. Europe				85%	100%		
Asia	25%						80%
Latin America	50%						

Figure 7: proportion of emergency appeals per geographical region by sample year

What is notable about this narrow focus of humanitarian ads is, of course, the complete absence of fundraising attempts targeting other crises such as those of Angola, Congo or Sudan, where need was arguably no less urgent (Holm 2002, Olsen et al. 2003). In year 2000, when need was critical in these areas, there were no emergency ads at all – all ads in 2000 were associated with general purpose collects or other events. The remarkable absence of emergency ads that year, indicates that the narrow focus of recent years' humanitarian ads is not simply the result of a public saturation point which requires humanitarian organizations to focus on one emergency at a time. It indicates that without a slipstream from mainstream media, for the organizations to follow, there will be no emergency fundraising. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the news agenda of the mainstream media in 2000 in order to provide an explanation for the absence of emergency ads that year, but certainly it seems likely that no humanitarian disasters that year have had sufficient news-worthiness and thus there has been no mass media emergency slipstream for humanitarian organizations to follow that year.

Although arguably resource issues have a role to play – the small standardized rubrics are inexpensive and published instantly - the tendency toward exclusion of contextual information and motivation in ads testify to a lack of priority given to substantiating causes, reasons for acting, or modes of humanitarian operation. Humanitarian organizations, it appears, not only let news media set the agenda for their public fundraising campaigns, but also leave it to news media to provide all contextual information regarding emergencies. The fact that a similar, albeit less marked,

development toward de-contextualization takes place in general purpose ads points in the direction of a wider-ranging dissociation of the humanitarian organization from a role as a source of knowledge and expertise in public life.

THE POWER OF NEWS MEDIA

Though aid NGOs are still widely considered leading agencies in the promotion of global humanitarianism, the increase and narrow focus of emergency ads in this material reminds us that their capacity to be so is highly dependent on the mass media. It is in and through the media that NGO aims and appeals, images and ideals are principally disseminated and become known, and it is by these same means that public sympathies and support are periodically galvanized in humanitarian appeals. In the crisis triangle composed of humanitarianism, news media and governments, the news media occupy a critical role (Minear et al 1996, Cottle & Nolan 2007)

The dynamics by which media come to play a crucial role in global politics is widely known as the "CNN Effect", referring to the capability of media to trigger political responses by focusing public attention and national policy on specific crises (Olsen et al 2003). In an alternative view, the "manufactured consent" theory postulates that governments may manipulate the media to support and justify predetermined policies, typically in the form of military interventions. It has been argued that the "CNN Effect" occurs when governmental policies toward a crisis are ill-defined and uncertain, allowing public opinion to drive governmental or organizational action, and that "manufactured consent" occurs when governmental policy is well-established, but must justify itself in the minds of the public (Livingston & Eachus 1995). Looking specifically at humanitarian crises it is widely acknowledged that the situation is different from the one prevailing in foreign politics in general. Thus, Lionel Rosenblatt argues that 'in a narrowly focused discussion such as humanitarian emergencies, the media play a decisive role in informing the public and stimulating action' (1996, cited in Olsen et al 2003:112). There seems to be general support for the claim that media coverage is important for promoting political action in case of humanitarian crisis with a strong CNN effect in instances of aid relief and deployment of troops as part of a non-coercive operation (Robinson 1999, Olsen et al 2003). Humanitarian interventions into Ethiopia in 1984 and Somalia in 1992 are often cited as early examples of this effect, which seems to hold true not only for political action, but also for private aid organizations.

The media have covered some of the most devastating disasters sporadically: the genocide in Darfur (2003) that displaced 1.2 million people and killed hundreds of thousands; the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1998-2003) that killed 3.8 million people, the famine in Niger that currently threatens 2.4 million people. In particular the news stories of 2005, Susan Moeller contends, made clear that the mass of mainstream media look for the opportunity to economically report on a sensational story of proven interest to their target demographic before they look for importance (Moeller 2006).

National security interest notwithstanding, preconditions for media to focus intensely on a humanitarian crisis are determined by the chronology of the event, the access to imagery and the character of the affected population. First, intense coverage requires that the event is breaking news, rather than chronic events or slowly building crises (Natsios 1996, Lobb & Mock 2007) and the event has to fit into a news attention cycle whereby only one crisis at a time can obtain visibility (Livingston 1996). Second, the event must provide the basis for producing dramatic and emotive imagery, whereby manageable – and affordable - access to the affected region becomes a major issue. The much discussed unprecedented attention to the 2005 Asian Tsunami is widely ascribed to the availability of disaster movie-quality images shot by tourists and disseminated via the internet. Third, media have a preference for innocent sufferers such as children and populations that are culturally and racially similar to the target population. For example, throughout the late 1990s, civil wars in Bosnia and Kosovo received intense coverage in the Western media, while those in the Congo and Sierra Leone received minimal and sporadic coverage (Lobb & Mock 2007). Whether this is the result of cultural, racial or political bias, the media come to define whose suffering deserves moral outrage and whose suffering should pass unnoticed. Finally, so called 'Complex emergencies', based on human conflicts, rarely draw significant international coverage, and neither do simple emergencies after the initial shock is past. In Susan Moeller's words *"It is not consciousness of another's pain that compels media attention; rather, it is the media's conviction that certain kinds of pain are fascinating for their public—pain that is understood to be tolerable. Pain that devolves into grinding misery is at once debilitating to manage and hard to ameliorate, pain that is too acute is at once hard to imagine and difficult to empathize with. The media does not know how to describe such pain in ways that their audience can feel other than overwhelmed and helpless"* (Moeller 2006:186).

That the news agenda is determined by such selection criteria is hardly news, nor is it unexpected that the biased public attention that results, has economic implications for humanitarian organizations. What is surprising, however, is the complete absence of attempts from humanitarian organizations to counter the media agenda that the data suggests. In one of their principle mass outlets, several of the gravest humanitarian disasters of the past 20 years do not figure at all. The humanitarian sector, it would appear, does not have the resources to create sufficient visibility for the media's forgotten emergencies for it to be a worthwhile endeavor. In order to maximize the financial benefit from the genre, humanitarian organizations let a market economy of attention shape a crucial part of their public appearance. In addition to giving up their agenda, the ads indicate that the organizations also increasingly withdraw their voice, their evaluations of the need, causes and possible resolutions to crises as well as their suggestions as to why we should care. The capacity of the humanitarian sector to affect general public knowledge about crises and emergencies is, it seems, determined by the extent to which they are able to affect the media agenda through press work. News criteria compel organizations to use substantial resources for pitching their causes in ways that render them newsworthy, not rarely employing strategies that essentially contradict their humanitarian ethic, by focusing on local relevance in terms of affected fellow nationals or national security issues or by simplifying, personalizing and emotionalizing complex structural issues (Cottle & Nolan 2007). This dependency leaves the humanitarian sector increasingly ensnared in a global 'media logic', which is as indispensable as it is inimical to NGO aims and ideas of global humanitarianism. In order to attract media spotlight they deploy communication strategies which practically detract from their principle remit of humanitarian provision and fragment the historically founded ethic of universal humanitarianism. This deep seated contradiction haunts both the practice and idea of global humanitarianism. As Cottle and Nolan put it, humanitarian organizations are now working within, not simply sourcing, today's media regime whose priorities and predispositions are not principally founded on the historically forged commitment to global humanitarianism (Cottle & Nolan 2007). To the extent that these media propensities win out, as the humanitarian ads indicate that they do, the historical project of global humanitarianism is weakened.

THE BENEFICIARY AND NEW MODES OF REPRESENTATION

The most noticeable development in the past 40 years of humanitarian newspaper advertising is the increase in notification type ads, which provide neither enticement nor incitement. In the ads that make use of enticement, however, marked shifts can also be found.

Humanitarian imagery which depicts recipients do so generally with a view to creating affinity between audiences and publics – a (non-reciprocal) relation which aims at causing the member of audience to extend his sense of responsibility to those depicted even though she does not and cannot know them, nor in any direct way help to alleviate their suffering. This relation can be one of for instance identification, solidarity or complicity reinforced by affective responses such as indignation, outrage, compassion, guilt, shame, fear. In the ad material, clear changes in the representation of the beneficiary for affinity emerge. These changes stand out very clearly in the set of three ads, which I will examine further below. Each of them is an emergency ad in relation to famine in Africa and displays a close-up of an African child. Incidentally, these three are the only ads in the dataset to make use of this particular type of imagery and they occur at long intervals. The first in 1980, the second in 1990 and the third in 2005.

The first ad is from the Red Cross, placed in Politiken in 1980. Under the heading, *Africa is starving*, it displays a photograph of the head, shoulders and chest of a small, famished child lying flat on a piece of cloth on the ground, facing the camera. Its rib cage protrudes the skin, each rib drawing clear white lines against the skin as if about to break through it. Its balled head is enormous against the shrunken torso and the large almond shaped eyes are withdrawn into the circular bone structure around them. In the right eye, where a tear might have been, is a fly –pointing not to emotion but to immanent decay. The child is utterly expressionless, the eyes unfocused, the face motionless. Only the hand that seems to be slightly lifted in the left corner of the image, indicates that the child is still alive.

Example 3: Red Cross, 1980

The child in the image has no identity. No gender, no history, no family, no emotions. Stripped of all humanity and appearing almost alien-like, the child seems reduced to a symbol. The text of the ad reads:

AFRICA IS STARVING
Red Cross in all of Scandinavia is asking for your help.

An emergency has struck Eastern Africa. In the countries Ethiopia, Somalia and Uganda millions are suffering from severe food deficits. Every day many people die from famine. Women and Children are struck the hardest.

It is the drought, which is causing the famine. This year it is particularly grave. The crops are destroyed. All supplies have been used.

These people are in severe need of help – now. The Red Cross needs 70 million kroner for the purchase and transportation of foods. The International Red Cross is on location with man power. But funding is lacking.

We cannot provide these people with rain – but we can give them food. IT IS URGENT!!!

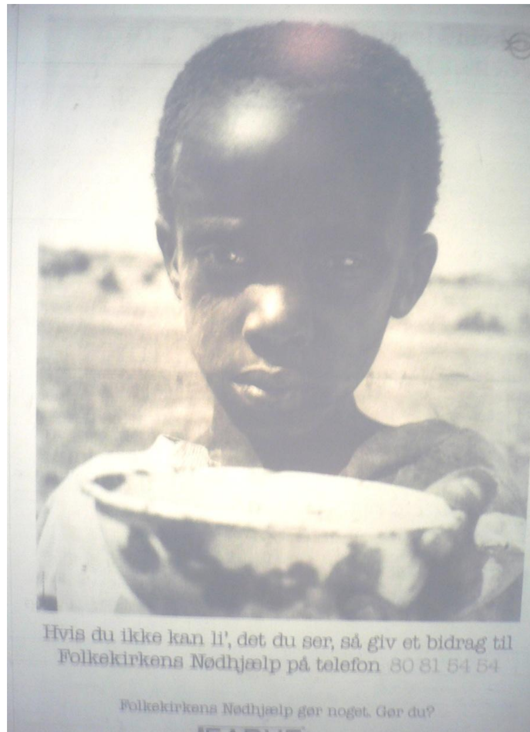
All households will receive a payment slip from Red Cross Thursday or Friday. Your contribution is needed. Payment slips are available at the post office.
The collection 'Africa is starving' is the first collective collect undertaken by all the Nordic divisions of the Red Cross.

Thank you for your help.

The ad is from 1980, when the severe Sahel drought and the massive humanitarian attention toward it, was just beginning and the ad's incitement is extensive, elaborating both immediate cause, extent and remedies, thus presenting the cause with no assumption of pre-existing public knowledge of it, although news media were already reporting on this disaster. The linguistic text is organized in short propositions, providing it with both a manner of factuality and sober detachment while at the same time creating a staccato effect that reinforces the sense of urgency which the text expresses.

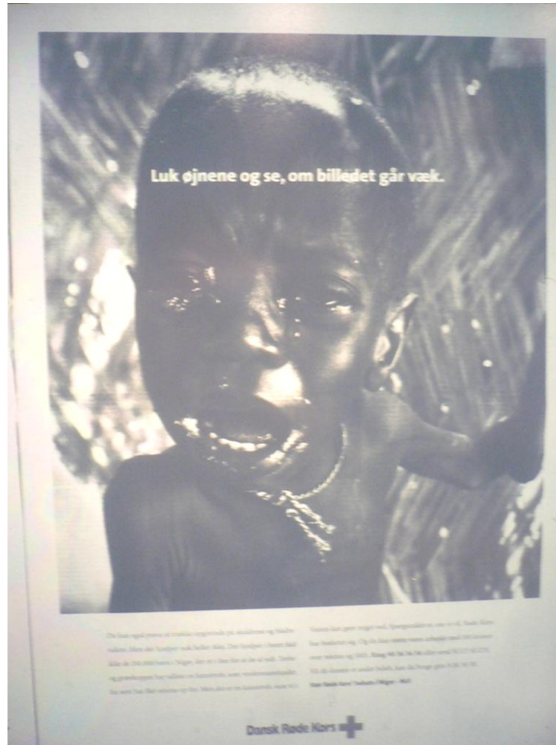
The 1990 ad is from DanChurchAid and, again depicts the child from shoulders up, but contrary to the 1980 image this child is clothed and not emaciated. Standing against the background of a dried-out landscape, he holds his bowl up toward the camera. Where the 1980 image showed a feeble and withdrawn child, this child has a very strong presence, looking insistently and with a glance that seems almost slightly spiteful, into the camera. The caption reads, simply: *If you don't like what you see, make a contribution to DanChurchAid at [number]. DanChurchAid acts. Do you?*

Here then, information about the cause itself, which was prioritized in the 1980s ad, is excluded as superfluous or irrelevant – not even the geography of the emergency or its nature is mentioned. The ad is entirely enticement based and concerned exclusively with the appeal of the child, of the relation between beneficiaries and donor publics. The caption ' if you don't like what you see' thematizes not the cause of the appeal but the witnessing of the audience. This focus is accentuated in the - practically legendary - TV-spot from the same year with which this ad is associated.



Example 4: DanChurchAid, 1990

The spot showed the same boy, walking alone through a bare and devastated landscape with the bowl in his hand. He gradually approaches the camera, and when he reaches it, looks straight into the lens, at us as audience, and knocks on the lens – and thus the viewer's TV-screen - with his bowl (The newspaper ad reproduces this last moment of the film). At this moment, the boy steps out of the role as object of the audience's glance and becomes an acting subject, at once pointing to the medium and traversing it with a direct appeal to give him food. By knocking on the screen, the boy draws attention to his mediation, the staging of the scene and his appearance in it as a symbol and in this way, the spot becomes a meta-discourse on the humanitarian appeal.



Example 5: Red Cross, 2005

The third and last ad, from the Red Cross in 2005, again shows the head, chest and shoulders of a small child. This child, however, is sitting up against the background of what could be a bamboo wall. Although the child is clearly famished, his arms skinny and surplus skin folding in the arm pit, he does not have the skeletal appearance of the 1980's child. Tears are filling his eyes and flooding down his cheeks. His forehead is contracted and his mouth opened into a cry. His left arm raised toward the camera, he faces us and directs his distress at us. Contrary to the image of 1980, this photo is full of motion and it portrays agony and protest, targeted directly at the reader.

The text which accompanies the photo reads:

Close your eyes and see if the image goes away

You can also try to shrug your shoulders in resignation and browse on. But that won't help either. It certainly won't help the 10.000 children in Niger, who are at risk of dying from starvation. Drought and grass hoppers have caused an emergency which the international society is only just opening their eyes to. But it is an emergency which we in the West can do something about. The question is whether we want to. The Red Cross has made up its mind. And you can support our work with 100 kroner by telephone and SMS. Call [number] or send FAMINE to [number]. If you want to donate a different amount, you can use account number [number].

Support Red Cross' efforts in Niger- NOW!

Although the linguistic text is richer than that of the 1990 ad, it remains highly enticement oriented and similar in a number of ways. While it does make use of the incitement types of cause and extent, contrary to the 1980 ad, this is not the sole information of any proposition in the text, but instead context for negotiations of the role of the individual member of audience as well as the role of the organization and the general public.

> *[closing your eyes] certainly won't help the 10.000 children in Niger, who are at risk of dying from starvation.*
>
> *Drought and grass hoppers have caused an emergency which the international society is only just opening their eyes to.*

Like the 1990 ad, the relation of benefactors toward sufferers is addressed as one of witnessing. In terms of the linguistic text, the focus of the appeal is on the position of the benefactors – the potential donor, the humanitarian organization and the global public – and the uncertain causation between knowledge, acknowledgement and action.

These three ads make use of the same basic iconography of suffering – the head shot of the child – but within this overall frame, they are distinguished by features that can be taken as, if not characteristic at least, symptomatic of transformations in the underlying working conditions of humanitarian organizations. Where the image from 1980 showed the dehumanized child, a profoundly alienating symbol of famine, the 1990 and 2005 images can be seen as reintroductions of the human into the humanitarian appeal. The 1990 ad does not depict suffering as embodied in the child, instead the child enacts the call for action. In the 2005 ad, conversely, the child does

embody suffering, but it is a depiction of a human in protest of an inhumane existence which evokes the imagination of our own children's suffering with horror and with indignation.

BENEFICIARY EMPOWERMENT

NGOs remain under fire—both the well-intentioned aid worker who demeans suffering with "harried efficiency or working tedium" (Anderson 2000:499) and the powerful institutions that strategically turn suffering into "a commodity to be worked on and recast" (Cohen 2001:169). Images of suffering are especially contested. Distant suffering takes place in a "global visual field of often quite standardized representational practices"—either lone individuals or a seething mass, victimized, hungry, staring blankly for a pitying audience far away (Malkki 1996). The mass media and NGOs alike have been widely criticized for using such images to prompt emotional responses in readers and viewers—everything from sympathy, pity, empathy and sadness to anger and indignation—as a means to elicit donations and capture attention (Campbell 2004, Cohen 2001, Moeller 1999, Van der Gaag and Nash 1987). The persistent iconography of fundraising appeals, the tight-shot close-up photograph of a single child—usually not older than ten, looking, wide-eyed, directly into the camera have been condemned for provoking sympathy for passive suffering rather than support for active struggle (Burman 1994, Moeller 1999, Ruddick 2003).

This condemnation began already in the mid 1970s when radical critics, on the basis of dependency and neo-colonialism theories, began attacking the traditional starving child appeals, calling for a commitment to long-term structural change and to actively educate donors, not just sentimentally luring them into a guilty gesture of charity. Accused of portraying a particular kind of helplessness that parallels colonial iconography of savagery and reinforces colonial relations of power, these images are denounced for offering icons of an infantilized place, a place that is passive, pathetic, and demanding of help from those with the capacity to intervene. Pathetic images of starving children, helpless and dependent, are argued to perpetuate a patronizing, offensive and misleading view of the developing world as a spectacle of tragedy, disaster, disease and cruelty (Lidchi 1999). When children are portrayed alone in aid appeals, without markers of culture, history, or community the absence of meaningful distinguishing features renders the lone child a representation of

humanity as a whole and not any of the actual children affected by political circumstances (Burman 1994, Ruddick 2003). The problem with images of anonymous and autonomous children—cast adrift from surrounding adults, local cultures, and indigenous aid organizations—is that when isolated anonymous children appear without recourse to kinship structures or community support mechanisms, an impression of their absolute vulnerability is promoted, while the visible connotations of protection and rescue suggested by the presence of aid workers exaggerate the power and influence of external forces. The impression of children's total dependence on outside forces for protection and care may inflate donors' sense of external efficacy, authority and power to the advantage of the NGO, but at the expense of the integrity of the beneficiary.

Critics refer to this iconography as used by fundraising appeals as a pornography of poverty, the use of starving babies and other emotive imagery to 'coax, cajole and bludgeon donations from a guilt-ridden Northern public'. (Smillie, 1995: 136). The public display of an African child with a bloated stomach in advertisements, they contend, "is pornographic because it exposes something in human life that is as delicate and deeply personal as sexuality, that is, suffering". It puts people's bodies, their misery, their grief and their fears on display with all the details and all the indiscretion that a telescopic lens will allow" (Lissner 1981), mobilizing "a pornographic spectatorial imagination between disgust and desire" (Chouliaraki 2010:110). Along the same lines, criticism against 'consumer aid' abounds in response to the appropriation of charity by the popular culture, starting with Band Aid in the mid 1980 and continuing with increasing celebrification of humanitarian appeals. The African subjects of these popular campaigns are argued to be objectified and transformed into consumer items. "People would buy the paraphernalia that denoted that they cared… and watch pictures of themselves, or millions like them, caring" (Lidchi 1999). Such conceptions of postmodern altruism view the reality of famine as turned into a spectacle, image-driven, hedonistic and self-referential. (Cohen 2001, Tester 2010)

Since the early 1990s, shared codes of conduct on images and messages, internal image guidelines, and inter-organizational conferences show the extent to which NGOs have become concerned about issues of representation and development education that grow out of this criticism. The 2006 'Code of Conduct on Images and

Messages Relating to the Third World', asks European NGOs to *"avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalize or discriminate against people, situations or places"* and to *"Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves"*[i] . Save the Children's 1991 *Focus on Images* demanded respect for dignity and cautioned against representing entire communities, continents and worlds as "*helpless recipients of handouts*". Save the Children's current photography guidelines expressly reject "*pictures where the child is posing, or smiling at the camera*" and encourage images that show "*children getting on with their lives rather than engaging with the camera*" and images that show the organization's work to be "*having an impact and helping to change children's lives*" (quoted in Manzo 2008). Similarly, the Red Cross code of conduct says: "*In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified humans, not helpless objects*" providing "*an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears*" (ibid). Oxfam's image guidelines, in turn, ask for the subjects of images to be named and made known.

Criticism of their representational practices has thus been considered so pertinent and/or potentially damaging to humanitarian organizations that standards have been formulated widely in the sector. In the dataset, there is no evidence that the use of the child icon itself has diminished, but representations of beneficiaries are transformed as regards the agency with which they are endowed. This is likely the outcome of attempts to safeguard the dignity of beneficiaries, but it is worth noting that these attempts only address a modest part of the criticism. Representations of beneficiaries are not only still infantilized, but also remain entirely decontextualized. The effectiveness of the figure of the suffering child as a mode of appeal, which allows humanitarian organizations to maintain a discourse of nurture while steering clear of discourses that could be perceived as politically or ideologically invested, seems to counterbalance the risk of delegitimization that such representations of beneficiaries involves. In other words, although the pressure on representational practices has been taken seriously enough by the sector for standards and guidelines to be developed, this pressure exists in a tension with 'market forces' which, it would appear, prohibits the complete abandonment of criticized practices. The weight of the concern with donors as consumers, that this testifies to, is echoed in the preoccupation with donors' discomfort at images of suffering in the 1990 and 2005 ads, which as we have seen, takes priority over informing donors about need. What

this seems to suggest is that rather than aiming to present a solidarity figure, the feeling, consciousness and conscience of the benefactors themselves are at stake.

THE DONOR AND NEW MODES OF ACTION

The third theme of change that the ads testify to concerns the role that humanitarian appeals offer to the donor by means of the type of action they make available. In the following, I contrast a 1970 ad with a 2005 ad both eliciting donations for relief work in connection with an earthquake.

The 1970 text is a fundraising ad from DanChurchAid, raising funds for emergency relief in connection with an earthquake in Peru. The ad displays the word Peru in very large font filling the top left quarter of the ad, the black letters cracked as if by the earth quake. The heading reads '*Peru – earthquake emergency relief*', followed by the sub-heading *'The greatest distance is between you and the post office*'. Underneath, the text reads '*One of history's greatest earthquake disasters has struck Peru. Epidemics and hunger threaten the survivors. Help now – send money to DanChurchAid*' and then, again in large letters which fill the lower right corner of the ad, the account number, where donations can be deposited. The ad makes use of both enticement and incitement. Relying on the audience's preexisting knowledge of the earth quake, the ad's incitement is constructed through a measure of the *extent* of the need – it is not only a severe disaster, but one of history's most severe.

Example 6: DanChurchAid, 1970

The enticement of this ad lies in the subheading *'The greatest distance is between you and the post office..'*. Using the topos of distance, the ad addresses reluctance to act based on the perception that the suffering is too psychologically distant for the audience to be concerned about it or that the suffering is too remote for the audience to have an impact upon it. It is suggested that the only factor that obstructs assistance coming to those in need is the readers' possible inaction. The enticement is thus primarily constructed through agency, the insistence that it is in fact possible to act upon distant suffering and that arguments for inaction on the basis of the insurmountability of distance are invalid.

The 2005 ad is part of a campaign to donate kitchen utensils for people who have been rendered homeless by the earthquake in Pakistan in October 2005. The campaign is a partnership between the host newspaper, Politiken, and the Red Cross. The ad was printed on the front page of the news paper in December, and the text simply reads 'This year's Christmas present. Just 140 kroner'. The image shows a basic set of kitchen utensils: pots and pans, cutlery, tin-plates and mugs. The ad is part of a larger campaign with rubrics which provide vast incitement posted inside the newspaper and in later issues.

The image of the kitchen utensils points to the very basic nature of the needs of the affected people. Not only has the infrastructure of their everyday lives been shattered, they are stripped of even the basic ability to prepare a meal for the family. The kitchen utensils at once stress the shared conditions of everyday life between beneficiaries and donors, evoking the image of a family meal, and also provides the beneficiaries with agency – an ability to provide for themselves- in a way that the traditional emergency food supplies, does not. In this way, without providing any manifest representation of the beneficiary, the image manages to construct a beneficiary with humanity, agency and urgent need.

The construction of the subject position of the donor, and the enticement aspect of the appeal, lies in the elliptical relationship between image and verbal heading *'This years' Christmas present. Only 140 kroner'*. It is the contradiction between the verbal and the visual which causes the ad to attract attention. In attempting to create coherence between the verbal and the visual statement, the reader is likely to recognize one aspect of the image which belongs to a different domain from the Western domestic,

namely the tin-mugs, with their strong connotative link to emergencies and relief work. For the reader who lingers to understand the riddle of the ad, what was initially an undesirable Christmas present, ironically arranged as if it were precious silverware, is transformed into an acutely desired life-necessity and in this transformation the contrast between the abundance of the reality of the reader and the scarcity of the world of the beneficiary unravels. In this single move, the ad enables the activation of feelings of shame which may contribute to motivating action, but, crucially, this shame is not articulated by the organization itself, but rather arises in the meaning-making process of the reader himself and thus gives less of a moralizing role to the organization.

Example 7: Red Cross and Politiken, 2005

The donation scheme of this campaign differs in vital ways from traditional campaigns. While essentially the donor is still making a simple money transfer, he is provided with exact knowledge of what his money will buy. The donations are- or so we are led to believe- packaged into gifts that are given to individual families and so this donation scheme constructs the perception of a gift exchange from one family to another, where the intervention of the humanitarian organization is reduced to a means of transportation. In this way, the campaign enables a different symbolic relation between the donor and beneficiary, which is less mediated. The individual donor acts directly on the everyday life-circumstances of the individual beneficiary and as such the donation scheme can be seen as reducing the distance between donor and beneficiary.

In this way, the crucial difference between the 1970 and the 2005 earthquake appeal is in the agency that it makes possible for the audience. The 1970 addresses the problem of agency by pointing out that all it requires for the audience to engage with the suffering in Peru is a trip to the post office. This appeal simply addresses – and dismisses- the problem of distance for agency. In contrast, the 2005 appeal can be seen as an attempt to overcome this distance. The concretized donation scheme singularizes the donor and, by facilitating the imagination of the other, in the same move singularizes the beneficiary.

DONOR EMPOWERMENT

The donation scheme offered in the 2005 ad, exemplifies a new and widespread trend in humanitarian appeals. While this is not a topic that has as yet received much academic attention, in recent years a marked development toward donor engagement is taking place in the humanitarian sector. Until recently, charitable support behavior was limited to various forms of donations, volunteerism and charity events (Peloza and Hassay 2007). The active engagement that such humanitarian action involved, decreased in the course of the 1990s as donations turned into 'memberships' constituted by an automatic monthly bank transfer or, following a gist that already existed in traditional charity lotteries, these traditional modes of supporting were expanded to include cause-related marketing and charity branded products through commercial partnerships (Bennett & Gabriel 2000). Recent years, have seen a counter-reaction to these unengaged donor schemes which give rise to fundamentally new conditions for fundraising, namely 'venture philanthropy', 'participatory philanthropy' and 'commodity philanthropy'.

> "When you Fund a Project, you decide how to invest your gift. You pick the projects that are most important to you, and you decide how you'd like to change the world for the better." (www.heifer.org)

In *venture philanthropy* (and social entrepreneurship) humanitarian funding is treated as an investment rather than as the traditional concept of a charitable donation, with corresponding expectations of return on investment, operating efficiencies, and management oversight that this requires (Sievers 1997). In this way venture philanthropy is not strictly altruistic, but an investment format with social benefit as a derivative. *Participatory philanthropy* is a form of engagement with NGOs which involves a significantly greater autonomy on the part of the donor. Donors are increasingly offered a tailored - or involved in tailoring –engagement, rendering it a form of philanthropic 'experience' over which the donor exerts considerable control (Ostrander 2007). This type of philanthropy has become typical among 'wealthy donors', who are enabled and encouraged to give more and more specific directives about their gifts (ibid). 'Giving-circles' where large numbers of donors pool their resources and in discussion groups decide how to allocate funds, are a similar new example of a more participatory and donor-controlled, pick-and-choose form of philanthropy (Rutnik & Bearman 2005). The participatory dimension of these new forms of philanthropy are very much centered on selectivity. Recent forms of individualized micro-loan schemes integrate both the pick-and-choose aspect of participatory philanthropy and the return on investment logic of venture philanthropy. Kiva.org is one of many internet-based organizations which allow small local entrepreneurs to advertise their project so that donors can browse through hundreds of project proposals, from which they choose from a drop-down menu which amount to lend to which project – from 25$ to several thousand. Where Kiva is a non-profit lending scheme, eBay-owned Microplace is an investment system with varying interest rates which provide 'donors' with a modest profit, thus both symbolically and economically realizing the venture ideal. *Commodity philanthropy*, finally, is a form of participatory philanthropy whereby humanitarian organizations offer donors a range of places to donate to and 'concrete' gifts to choose from - a goose, a goat, a fishing net, mosquito net, a school desk, a month's salary for a teacher etc. (e.g. Oxfam, Heifer, Christian Aid, DanChurchAid) (Schultz 2009,

Jackson 2006). The 2005 'This years' Christmas present' ad is a moderate example of such commodity philanthropy.

These new forms of philanthropy are all characterized by increased donor control. New forms of humanitarian action are immersed in tailored, interactive environments that donors themselves help create and they are encouraged to create their own 'stories' of social change. On the one hand, these new forms of donation demystify humanitarian action and give the donor the impression that his donation is translated into concrete, clear and comprehensible action with an immediate effect on the life of the receiver. They have the potential to evoke a sense of immediacy between donors and recipients and singularizes both donor and recipient – from the point of view of the donor. At the same time, however, this form of giving clearly becomes part of an experience economy. Studies of giving circles have found that "joy and satisfaction" from this "personal form of philanthropy" is the primary motive of their members (Rutnik & Bearman 2005: 21) just like a study of new humanitarian engagement shows that "those donors who give out of guilt or duty are (literally) dying out and being replaced by a younger generation who want to be *inspired"* (Lawson & Ruderham 2009:380).

While the Christmas present ad is a less radical example of donor engagement and donor controlled support schemes have by no means replaced traditional donations, it can be taken as symptomatic of a new, and in all likelihood expanding, strategy for engaging donor publics. The development towards donor schemes which offer humanitarian action as experience involves obvious problems. First, while distance is clearly the key condition and core obstacle for humanitarian appeal, it is not clear what is to distinguish the virtual immediacy that these donation schemes give rise to from a fictional, game-like experience, which essentially objectifies beneficiaries. Second, by discounting the competence of humanitarian organizations as well as recipients to define need and distribute resources, these schemes may not only render aid less effective but also trivialize suffering and its structural causes. Finally, the individualization of action that lies at the core of these donation schemes, drains them of political content. When humanitarian action ceases to be collective, public action it can no longer address structural issues and when the humanitarian sector seizes to define and cultivate shared interests and values, it loses a core function as civil society agent.

DISCUSSION

The historical investigation of humanitarian newspaper ads has exposed marked shifts in three areas: humanitarian organizations' public agenda, public representations of beneficiaries and their positioning of donors. All these changes reflect shifts in power brought about by pressures from external parties, who are able to exert immense influence due in great part to humanitarian organizations' economic dependency.

The reliance on the news media agenda with criteria of news worthiness which are at odds with the basic principle of humanity - the moral foundation of humanitarian organizations- not only has consequences for the public agenda of humanitarian organizations and, in all likelihood, for their operational agenda. It also has the consequence of rendering organizations' neutrality and impartiality questionable and of creating a distorted public image of the organization as well as a fragmented and vague understanding of global politics. If we cannot trust neither our news media nor humanitarian organizations as the vulnerable's representatives, to provide us with a nuanced and balanced image of the world, from where are we, indeed, to get such an understanding? The uncertainty with which we are left, is likely to bolster anti-humanitarianism and social inaction.

The symbolic empowerment of beneficiaries as a response to criticism of condescending post-colonial representational practices testifies to humanitarian organizations' extreme susceptibility to questioning of the legitimacy of its power. It is interesting that this debate is limited to criticisms of images and does not involve neither enticement nor incitement beyond imagery. The concern with the dignity of recipients does not lead to standards and codes that commit humanitarian organizations to integrate advocacy and fundraising such that appeals are based on appreciation of causes and resolutions. On the contrary, we can observe that, at least in the genre of newspaper ads, the humanitarian organization increasingly withdraws its voice, providing still less contextualization for their appeals. The representation of the beneficiary becomes empowered in the sense of being re-humanized and of actively addressing the audience with his need, while the organization abstains from translating this need into something that goes beyond the individual's cry for help.

The examination of the humanitarian ads of the past 40 years makes clear that humanitarian organizations are increasingly preoccupied with issues of ethics, which

to a great extent revolve around the problem of power: how to engage in a relation the essence of which is asymmetrical access to resources, without reinforcing this power asymmetry. This problem clearly haunts the humanitarian sector and drives shifts in representational as well as relational standards. The paradox of power is a likely contributing factor, also, in the increasingly minimalist newspaper ads, where the organizations retreat from the role as educators and moralizers. By reducing the humanitarian ad to a pointer towards events described in the news media, the ads elude the thorny question of power relations between organizations, donors and beneficiaries.

The tendency toward increasingly donor-controlled humanitarian support-schemes reflects a desire for an engagement in humanitarian action which goes beyond the, largely passive, membership and monthly transfer logics, which have characterized the humanitarian sector the past 15 years. These schemes reinvigorate the connectivity between donors and beneficiaries through concretization and individualization. In this way, donor engagement can be understood as another instrument in the struggle against degrading relations to beneficiaries. Donor engagement schemes can be construed as attempts to protect the dignity of beneficiaries and establish equality by singularizing them rather than treating them as an anonymous mass and by introducing the gift of various types of tools, to support beneficiaries' self-sustainment rather than making them the passive recipients of sacks of grain or other such aid-stereotypes. The Red Cross 'Christmas present' is a particularly pertinent example of this, as the gift of kitchen utensils evokes the image of the family, who provide for themselves with a bit of assistance, in contrast to the lone and detached child who is entirely at the mercy of the kindness of strangers, condemned in critiques of representations and rejected in recent years' codes of conduct.

The new empowerment discourse reflects and contributes to a shift in the ideological framing of humanitarianism. It substitutes public action for individual action on the giving as well as the receiving end of the humanitarian exchange. It is founded on the assumption that to be dignified, one must be self-supporting, that it is undignified to be the recipient of support that is not of utility for the giver and that equality grows naturally out of the individual's material opportunity. In this way, the struggle against accusations of post-colonialism leads the humanitarian sector toward a neo-liberal discourse, which discounts structural factors and places all agency in the power of

the individual. The dependence on market forces and the resulting susceptibility to consumer demands and critique, pushes the humanitarian organization toward a marginalization of itself and its role as mediator between a reality of abundance and a reality of need.

CONCLUSION

The historical investigation of humanitarian newspaper ads has exposed marked shifts in three areas: humanitarian organizations' public agenda, public representations of beneficiaries and their positioning of donors. These changes reflect more or less symbolic power shifts brought about by pressures from external parties, who are able to exert immense influence on humanitarian organizations due to their economic dependency. First, we have seen that not only do humanitarian organizations rely greatly on news media for setting their public agenda, they also increasingly withdraw their own voice from their appeals. Second, we have seen that the representational practices of humanitarian organizations are haunted by the paradox of power: how to engage in a relation the essence of which is asymmetrical access to resources, without reinforcing this power asymmetry. Criticism that grows out of this power paradox causes organizations to engage in a discourse of mutual benefit, inimical to the historical idea of global humanitarianism. In these ways, obeying market demands may cause humanitarian organizations to surrender their moral authority and professional expertise, leaving their appeals afloat in a moral and political vacuum.

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CONCLUSION

The four papers of this thesis examine the humanitarian appeal as it is articulated in three different media: TV-spots, newspaper ads and brochures. These are media with vastly different affordances and institutional properties, which give rise to differences in the configuration of the appeal. TV spots are the most costly outlet for humanitarian communication and the outlet which reaches the widest audience. Humanitarian communication in this medium is more than any other medium branding oriented. It draws heavily on advertising discourse both in terms of aesthetics and semiotic code. The integration of humanitarian content in the commercial breaks of TV-programming carries with it certain format and style requirements and a competition for attention that sets relatively narrow limits for deviations. At the same time, however, the television medium offers a wealth of expressive resources from the combination of semiotic modalities that audiovisuality makes available. This means that while the genre conventions of the commercial restrain and define the humanitarian TV-spot, the medium also offers an opportunity to convey complex and subtle semiosis making it a particularly pertinent medium for organizations' self-promotion - a sensitive project for humanitarian organizations - than media that require more explicit discourses such as the brochure medium. In the TV-spot analyses, we saw how the verbal-visual correspondence indeed carried a significant part of the meaning making of the appeal, constructing discourses that were relegated to the sense-making of the individual viewer. By virtue of its branding orientation, the TV-spot more than any other genre comes to reflect the commercialization of humanitarian organizations and the consequences of commercialization for humanitarian identities. Articulating humanitarianism in an advertising discourse entails a logic of recognition and intimization, which grounds the appeal in the culture of the audience, and may serve to consolidate existing values rather than transform them through a sensitization to the difference and similarity of humanity. Branding, in this way, may obligate the organization to such forceful consumer demands that a deep conflict of identity for the organization results.

Newspaper ads - although involving a spectrum of genres such as rubrics, personals and job announcement - affordance-wise is a relatively restrictive medium. The variance we observe in humanitarian ads is limited to the notification and the plea types, conforming to highly conventionalized appeal structures with a relatively fixed inventory of incitement and enticement devices. More than any other humanitarian genre, the newspaper ad is concerned with contemporary humanitarian emergencies. This must be ascribed to the reinforcement effect the news medium offers and as we have seen, by prioritizing this reinforcement, humanitarian organizations simultaneously submit themselves to an external agenda setting, which is driven by its own political economy. By virtue of its news-orientation, the newspaper ad more than any other genre comes to reflect the marketization of humanitarian organizations. The marketization manifests itself not only in the compliance to competition for visibility, but just as much in the adoption of procedures and standards that serve to satisfy demands and pressures from external stakeholders. The submission to the power of stakeholders emphasizes the lack of autonomy of the organization and leads to a tendency for the organization to surrender its moral and political authority.

The humanitarian brochure, conversely, is an independent medium and as such not subject to institutional and financial restraints in the way TV-spots and newspaper ads are. It is, however, a highly conventionalized genre with very limited variation in terms of semiotic configuration across organizations as well as time. What distinguishes the brochure from the other two genres, more than anything, is time and space. It is a medium for contemplation and deliberation and it is this contemplative nature that renders it a genre of legitimation. By virtue of its legitimation-orientation the brochure, more than any other genre comes to reflect problems of trust. The issue of trust becomes visible when observing the development of humanitarian brochures over time, where reports of facts and figures regarding humanitarian need and performance are replaced by material where the representation of the concrete cause is lifted to abstract, symbolic constructions of legitimacy. The result of skepticism toward humanitarian communication is not attempts to reinstall trust in the organization, but rather to nurture the symbolic relations between the humanitarian organizations, not on a pragmatic dimension, but on a moral one. In this way, the examination of appeals as articulated in three different genres shows how the institutional and

technological mediation (hypermediacy) of humanitarian communication bear significantly upon the configuration of the appeal and the positioning of the humanitarian organization vis-à-vis donor publics.

While each genre in this way magnifies a particular aspect of the new conditions of existence of humanitarian organizations, they also testify to the same overall developments in terms of humanitarian identities. Across the three genres, we see a marked back-grounding of the concrete humanitarian cause. Although the visual representation of beneficiaries shows clear tendencies toward empowerment, the circumstances around the need of the beneficiary, its nature, its causes and the potential for resolution are increasingly omitted. In visual as well as linguistic representation, depictions of suffering are avoided. It is a commonly held belief in humanitarian fundraising circles – and one that is supported by empirical evidence – that positive response to humanitarian appeals requires a delicate representational equilibrium between suffering and relief, that distress caused by excessive suffering inhibits response. Given that this indicates that compassion thrives under moderate expressions of suffering, it is ironic that the aversion toward confrontations with suffering is so often understood under the notion of compassion fatigue. It would appear that it is not compassion that is fatigued. On the contrary, perhaps, the aversion toward depictions of suffering should be understood as an indication that the concern for fellow human beings is so deeply ingrained in our self-identity that confrontation with distant suffering threatens our sense of dignity and self-esteem. Without a strong conviction that humanitarian organizations can actually effectively alleviate the suffering to which they expose us, distressful appeals leave us humiliated and, as Cohen and Seu have shown, turn us against the organizations themselves. Faced with this challenge, humanitarian organizations are left with two options: To insist on the effectiveness of humanitarian action by focusing on individual cases and short term need, as we see it in the growing focus on emergency relief, or to renounce representations of suffering.

It is common-place for contemporary appeals that renounce representations of suffering to become meta-appeals, communication which reflects on the dilemmatic circumstances of humanitarian communication. We see this in the TV-spots, in the brochures and most manifestly in the MSF campaign described in the introduction to this thesis. The strategy of the meta-appeal allows the organization to involve the audience in the dilemma of humanitarian mediation and in so doing avoid arousing

feelings of manipulation that may cause audiences to reject its claim. In this way, the meta-appeal exemplifies a general tendency toward the engagement of audiences, which is the most notable characteristic of contemporary humanitarian communication. The void left by the abandonment of beneficiary representations is, so to speak, appropriated by the donor. Where previously the potential donor was represented in appeal texts primarily in terms of options for action, the contemporary appeal is very much organized around the donor's reasons for action. We see the concern with the donor's cultural values in the TV-spots, the new donor-controlled donation schemes in the newspaper ads and the vast over-prioritization of donor-representations in the brochure material. The pronounced donor focus indicates that reasons for action have come into question. The basic notions of humanitarianism, of universality and shared responsibility for humanity are under scrutiny as are the utility of humanitarian action and the feasibility of change. The shift of focus towards the donor, which we observe in all three genres, is strongly associated with a shift from appeals, which try to bridge distance by asking audiences to imagine the singular suffering, to appeals that ask the member of audience to imagine herself as singularized. This is to say that the problem of mediated suffering has turned from a problem of the vastness of sufferers toward a problem of the vastness of those potentially responsible, toward the singularization of responsibility. This corresponds to a shift from a core concern with affinity, the feeling for the distant other, to a concern with agency, the perception that it is in the power – and thereby the responsibility – of the individual member of audience to act in such a way as to change the reality of suffering.

Contrary to prevailing conceptions of modern, commercialized humanitarian communication, questions of ethics and morality play a greater role than ever. The appeal material across genres bears evidence to the organizations' struggle to legitimate themselves vis-à-vis questioning of the ethicality of their benevolence, the feasibility of their mission and the legitimacy of their moral claim. In the past 40 years, as we have seen, there has not been a time when suffering, compassion or indignation were center stage in the humanitarian appeal. We have moved from colonialist, objectifying discourses on suffering towards humanitarian discourses which, with immense self-consciousness, struggle to find ways of conceiving of the concern for distant others, which is not patronizing, which does not enact historical guilt tripping, which does not evoke the image of the African continent as a locus of

perpetual misery. In the attempt to avoid a conception of beneficiaries as pitiful and pathetic, discourses of mutual benefit are constructed. The result is a humanitarian discourse which cannot cultivate the type of cosmopolitanism that has the non-reciprocal demand of the other at heart (see p 17 above). The new humanitarian discourse is not, nor was it ever, a discourse which 'brings the other within reach' and preserves the other through difference as well as through shared identity, as in Silverstone's conception of Proper Distance. In order to avoid post-colonial representations that exaggerate difference (e.g. inert, emaciated babies), and representations that understate difference (e.g. grateful children, smiling into the camera) the beneficiary is given virtually no visibility at all - he is left fully to our imagination. The reflexivity that is invited for is a reflexivity over ourselves and over similarity. In this way, new humanitarian discourse brings to mind Berking's solidary individualism by which the building of self-identity depends on an increasing reflexive awareness of relations with others, causing the modern reflective subject to act towards changing the social world (p 16 above). Along these lines, contemporary humanitarian discourse, more often than not, argues for humanitarian action on the basis of an ethical capital with which it provides the donor. As long as there is such a moral benefit in humanitarian action, however, as long as concern for humanity has cultural value, it would be wrong, in my perception, to construe contemporary humanitarian discourse as signaling the defeat of humanitarianism. What we can observe is, rather, a humanitarianism in crisis. The dominance of reflections on reasons for action does not, in my view, indicate defeat but struggle. The discourse order of humanitarianism has been profoundly destabilized due to conflicting pressures from fields surrounding it and the subject positions it constructs are, as a result, highly ambiguous and internally contradictory.

The crisis of humanitarianism offers itself as an opportunity for humanitarian organizations to reflect on their practices and priorities. In order to become agents that promote cosmopolitanism, that advance an ethics of care and responsibility, and cultivate an identity for humanitarian audiences as citizens of the world, it seems that humanitarian organizations will have to reconquer their professional ethos and moral authority. Becoming explicit about ideology, about practices and dilemmas, about causes and extent of suffering, will no doubt divide the humanitarian field and lead to the alienation of part of the current base of support. Essentially, the choice is simple: to give priority to the quantity of assistance provided to people in need or to give

priority to the quality of the relation established between donor populations and recipients. Of course, there is no simple answer. This is a fundamental dilemma between a deontological, principled ethic and a teleological, consequential ethic. But this dilemma may only be short term: there is a real risk that by obeying market and consumer demands as they do, humanitarian organizations may ultimately contribute to deflating the cultural value that global humanitarianism still maintains and thereby ultimately to undermining their own basis of existence.

DISTANCE AND SUFFERING
HUMANITARIAN DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF MEDIATIZATION

Ph.d-afhandling, Anne Vestergaard

Denne artikelbaserede ph.d.-afhandling undersøger humanitære organisationers historie som aktører i den vestlige offentlighed. Ved at analysere diskurser i humanitære appelmaterialer fra 1970 frem til i dag, undersøger afhandlingen medialiseringens konsekvenser for humanitære organisationers identitet og for de dispositioner som diskurserne muliggør i forhold lidende i fjerne dele af verden. Kritisk diskursanalyse, medierings- og medialiseringsteori sætter den teoretiske ramme for en forståelse af humanitær identitet som formet i gensidige konstitueringsprocesser mellem organisationer, donorer og medier.

Artikel 1, *Humanitarian Branding and the Media. The case of Amnesty International*, præsenterer en multimodal analyse af en TV-reklame fra den danske afdeling af Amnesty International fra 2004. Analysen påviser en intens refleksivitet hos organisationen i forhold til dens kommunikative udfordringer. TV-reklamen fremstår som en meta-appel, der tematiserer medialiseringsproblematikken. Den er organiseret omkring 'compassion fatigue', men idet reklamen præsenterer en diskurs som udspiller en adskillelse af handling fra repræsentation, peger den på, at handling er mulig uden for repræsentationens rum. I og med denne adskillelse konstruerer reklamen dog en subjekt-position hvori handlingsrationaler er baseret på subjektets ønske om at beskytte sin egen sociale orden.

Artikel 2, *Identity and Appeal in the Humanitarian Brand,* præsenterer en multimodal analyse af to nyere TV-reklamer, en Amnesty-reklame fra 2001 og en Røde Kors-reklame fra 2005. Denne artikel fokuserer på de konsekvenser som indoptagelsen af virksomhedsnormer og værdier i den humanitære sektor har for den ideologiske positionering af publikum. Artiklen viser, at organisationen ved at anvende en branding-strategi, der anbefales som et redskab til at eksplicitere egen identitet, risikerer at bringe organisationens image i konflikt med dens selvforståelse og gøre sig til fortaler for en form for humanitarisme, der er funderet i kulturel narcissisme snarere end i ansvaret for den anden.

Artikel 3, *Mediatized Humanitarianism: Trust and Legitimacy in the Age of Suspicion,* præsenterer en diskursanalyse af 400 siders humanitært brochuremateriale, som dækker perioden fra 1970 til 2005. Artiklen peger på afgørende forskydninger i de

legitimiteringsdiskurser, som humanitære organisationer har benyttet sig af i perioden – fra en performance-baseret legitimitet via en institutionaliserings-legitimitet til en kompensationsbaseret legitimitet, som dominerer diskursen i 1990'erne og 2000'erne. Denne nye diskurs afspejler, at tillid til organisationen ikke længere er afgørende for humanitær legitimitet, men er erstattet af en byttelogik, hvor organisationens legitimitet afhænger af, hvad den kan give sit publikum til gengæld for donationen. Dette er dog på ingen måde en humanitær diskurs som er tømt for moralsk indhold – tværtimod involverer den en intens forhandling omkring moralsk agens.

Artikel 4, *Humanitarian Appeal and the Paradox of power,* undersøger udviklingen i humanitær markedsføring gennem analyse af 124 avis-reklamer fra Politiken i perioden 1970 til 2005. Ved hjælp af en kritisk diskursanalyse som kombinerer institutionsanalyse med multimodal tekstanalyse, skitserer artiklen de mest markante forandringer i periodens appelformer. Artiklen synliggør en tiltagende tendens til at humanitære organisationer underlægger sig eksterne krav, både hvad gælder prioriteringen af hvilke lidende, der skal have offentlighedens opmærksomhed og hvad angår den relation, som organisationen etablerer mellem lidende og donorer.

Afhandlingen konkluderer at humanitære organisationer står i en tvetydig og skrøbelig position mellem private og offentlige diskursordener, politiske diskursordener, mediernes diskursorden og markedsordenen og at dette efterlader dem som ustabile og selvmodsigende institutioner. Pres fra de omkringliggende felter har bragt den humanitære sektor i krise. Der sættes spørgsmålstegn ved grundlæggende forestillinger om humanitarisme, universalisme og fælles ansvar for menneskeheden, ligesom der stilles spørgsmål til nytten af det humanitære arbejde. Den humanitære diskurs, som er et resultat af denne krise, forsøger at slå bro over den moralske afstand mellem donoren og den lidende, ikke ved at singularisere den lidende eller rapportere om det humanitære arbejdes effekt, men ved at fokusere på den enkelte donor og at insistere på, at den humanitære organisation kan gøre en forskel – ikke i de lidendes liv, men i donorens.

Modsat herskende forestillinger om den moderne, kommercialiserede kommunikation spiller etiske og moralske spørgsmål en større rolle i dag end nogensinde tidligere. Appelmaterialet i denne afhandling vidner om organisationernes kamp for at legitimere sig i forhold til deres velgørenheds etiske status, deres missions gennemførlighed og deres moralske fordrings legitimitet – med en uhyre refleksivitet over deres egen rolle som moralske aktører i offentligheden som resultat.

DISTANCE AND SUFFERING
HUMANITARIAN DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF MEDIATIZATION

PhD Thesis, Anne Vestergaard

This thesis explores the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life. When taking on the role as mediators between Western publics and distant sufferers, what conception of social responsibility do humanitarian organizations promote? What are the consequences of the institutional context of these organizations on the form of social responsibility that they are able to promote? In a historical perspective, what changes in these conceptualizations can we observe and to what extent can we understand them as resulting from institutional changes? These questions are asked with the assumption that the discourse of humanitarian organizations is at once a reflection of and a force in the configuration of dispositions in target publics. Enquiring about the history of humanitarian organizations as agents in public life, thus, means enquiring about the ways in which over the past 40 years, these organizations have given meaning to our relation to different sufferers and contributed to shaping our individual and collective conception of the scope and nature of our social responsibility.

By analyzing discourses in humanitarian appeal material from 1970 to today, the thesis explores the consequences of mediatization for the identity of humanitarian organizations and for the dispositions vis-à-vis distant sufferers that these discourses enable. Critical discourse analysis, mediation and mediatization theory provide a vantage point from which to view humanitarian organizations as born out of processes of mutual constitution between organizations, audiences and media.

Paper 1, *Humanitarian Branding and the Media. The case of Amnesty International*, provides a detailed multimodal analysis of a TV spot released by the Danish section of Amnesty International in 2004. The analysis reveals an acute reflexivity on the part of the organization with respect to its communicative challenges. The spot presents a meta-appeal, which thematizes problems of mediatization. It is organized around an axis of compassion fatigue, but by presenting a discourse which enacts a separation of action from representation, it insists that action is possible. In the process, however, the TV spot by means of subtle semiotic choices, constructs a subject position in which reasons for action are based on a desire to protect the subject's own social order.

Paper 2, *Identity and Appeal in the Humanitarian Brand,* much like paper 1, presents a multimodal analysis of two contemporary TV spots, a 2001 spot from Amnesty

International and a Red Cross spot from 2005. This paper focuses on the consequences of the diffusion of corporate norms and values in the humanitarian sector, for the ideological positioning of the audience. It shows that by employing a branding strategy, which is advocated as a vehicle for an organization to be explicit about its identity, branding may in fact misalign image with identity and in so doing, advance a humanitarianism which is centered on cultural narcissism rather than a concern for the other, which accommodates difference.

Paper 3*, Mediatized Humanitarianism: Trust and Legitimacy in the Age of Suspicion,* presents a discourse analysis of 400 pages of humanitarian brochure material covering the period from 1970 to 2007. The paper reveals significant shifts in the legitimating discourses employed by humanitarian organizations during this period, from a performance based legitimacy, through legitimacy by institutionalization, to a compensation based legitimacy that dominates the 1990s and 2000s. This contemporary discourse reflects that trust in the organization has vanished as a component to humanitarian legitimacy, substituted by an exchange logic by which the organization's legitimacy derives from what it can offer the audience. This is by no means necessarily a discourse which is devoid of morality, on the contrary, it involves intense negotiation of moral agency.

Finally, paper 4: *Humanitarian Appeal and the Paradox of power,* examines the development of humanitarian advertising through analysis of 124 newspaper ads published in the period from 1970 to 2005. Using a discourse analytical approach which combines institutional analysis with multimodal text analysis, it draws out the most marked changes that can be observed in the mode of appeal employed during this period. The paper exposes an increasing submission of humanitarian organizations to external demands, in terms of their choice of beneficiaries for public attention and in terms of the relations they set up between donors and beneficiaries.

As a whole, the thesis argues that humanitarian organizations occupy an ambiguous and fragile position between private and public discourse orders, political discourse orders, the discourse order of the media and that of the market, rendering it a highly unstable and internally contradictory institution. The pressure from adjoining fields has caused a crisis in the humanitarian sector. The basic notions of humanitarianism, of universality and shared responsibility for humanity are under scrutiny as are the utility of humanitarian action and the feasibility of change. The resulting humanitarian discourse tries to bridge the moral distance from donor publics to distant sufferers, not by singularizing sufferers or reporting on the effect of humanitarian action, but instead by singularizing members of audience, insisting

not that the humanitarian organization can make a difference in the life of the vulnerable, but in the life of the donor.

Contrary to prevailing conceptions of modern, commercialized humanitarian communication, questions of ethics and morality play a greater role than ever. The appeal material bears evidence to the organizations' struggle to legitimate themselves vis-à-vis questioning of the ethicality of their benevolence, the feasibility of their mission and the legitimacy of their moral claim - with immense reflexivity over their own role as moral agents in public life as the result.

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