

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the recent waves of globalisation the world is continually becoming smaller and more accessible as metaphorical boundaries made up of cultural and geographical differences are being diminished daily by new advances in communication and technology (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008: Giddens, 2002: Held & McGrew, 2007). Access to the internet and web-enabled technology became widely available in the 1990'es, and has since enabled a multitude of possibilities and opportunities for contemporary global society developing "beyond the realm of government activity and education, coming to play an increasingly fundamental role in commercial activity, entertainment and many forms of social interaction" (Commins et al., 2010: Held & McGrew, 2007: Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p.8).

Wide access to the internet and these new technologies have resulted in what is argued to be a *Digital Generation* as adolescents of today represent the first generation to "grow up fully wired and technologically fluent" (Commins et al., 2010, p.1). Scholars such as Commins et al. (2010), Prensky, (2001) and Richey (2012) argue that the internet, and in particular, the phenomena of *Social Media* has become an integrated part of everyday life, especially in the lives of contemporary adolescents, as they use the internet and Social Media in various ways – namely, for socialisation. Researchers such as Clarke-Pearson and O'Keeffe (2011), Barker (2009) and Peter et al. (2006) opine that using Social Media has become one of the most common activities in contemporary adolescence. Clarke-Pearson and O'Keeffe (2011) surmise that adolescents use Social Media as a key source of knowledge, advice and information, whereas Barker (2009) opines that adolescents namely use it to stay connected with peers. Thus, it is argued that Social Media plays an important role in the social life of contemporary adolescents, in the sense that they rely on these online communities to connect and engage with their peers.

What makes this sort of socializing or connecting distinctive is the fact that it is occurring online, meaning that it is happening across social, cultural and geographical borders, and, furthermore, due to this global interconnection there is a vast source of information and ideas easily and readily available (Edgar &

Sedgwick, 2008: Giddens, 2002: Held & McGrew, 2007). As such, it is argued to be that the internet provides an unparalleled foundation for communication and information distribution.

In this regard, scholars such as Baylis et al. (2011), Donini (2010), Chouliaraki (2010) and Halupka (2014) argue that this development of globalisation also allows and enables individuals across the world to pursue political and humanitarian issues and causes “autonomously [and] on their own terms” (Halupka, 2014, p.115). In this context, researchers such as Fitri (2011) and Marsh (2011) opine that this participatory freedom presents alternative acts of humanitarian engagement in the form of online engagement – online petitions, content sharing, and functions like Facebook’s “Like” button etc.

Although there are differing definitions of humanitarianism, as a term scholars generally agree upon it being characterised as a shorthand which traditionally is used to encompass a complex set of thoughts, actions and institutions with the goal of extending sympathy and benevolence to those in need (Barnett and Weiss, 2008: Kennedy, 2002: Gierycz, 2010: Donini, 2010: Vissing, 2012). Thus, traditional acts of humanitarianism are associated with acts of moral obligation and charity. However, some scholars argue that the emergence of online participation within humanitarianism is resulting in a simplification and de-emotionalising of humanitarian engagement – i.e. online acts of participation equal convenient or “lazy” methods of engagement (Drumbl, 2012: Siegel, 2012: Waldorf, 2012). Drumbl, (2012), Siegel (2012) and Waldorf (2012) opine that online engagement simplifies humanitarian engagement and are concerned that online acts of humanitarianism do not provide legitimate acts of humanitarianism. This criticism of online engagement is commonly referred to as *Clicktivism* or *Slacktivism*. The debate around the legitimacy of online engagement is often discussed in connection with online and Social Media habits of today’s adolescents as some scholars – e.g. Drumbl (2012), Gamson & Sifry (2013), Pavia (2011) and White (2010) - are concerned for the long-term implications of online acts of participation on civic engagement. Contrarily, scholars such as Chouliaraki (2010), Vestergaard (2008) and Commins et al. (2010) suggest that Social Media should be used to engage and reach adolescents further in humanitarianism, as this is where a majority of contemporary Western adolescents operate on a daily basis.

As such, it is indicated that the critics argue that adolescents should not engage in humanitarianism through online acts as it may have long-term implications on their future civic engagement, and result in lazy or low intensity levels of engagement. To some extent these critics also indicate that privileged adolescents should engage in humanitarianism out of sense of moral obligation or benevolence. In this regard, it is interesting to consider why adolescents engage in humanitarianism, and whether or not they find it an important prioritisation in adolescence at all? Furthermore, what are adolescents' views on the debate on online engagement - Do they feel that online engagement has a negative or positive influence on their humanitarian engagement in general? And how great a part does online engagement play in their humanitarian engagement compared to "traditional" methods?

As such, this thesis will attempt to investigate humanitarian experiences and opinions of Western adolescents with a focus on their understandings of Social Media and online engagement. Therefore, this thesis takes its point of departure in the following research question:

*Why do Western adolescents engage in humanitarianism  
and how do they understand online engagement?*

Thus, this thesis will attempt to construct knowledge about humanitarian engagement in adolescence and present different perspectives on *why* adolescents engage in humanitarianism and *how* they understand online engagement.

Therefore, this will be investigated through examining and discussing the ways in which adolescents engage in humanitarianism and what influences their level of interest and engagement, as well as, their opinions on and experiences with online humanitarian engagement. The research will be based on a qualitative study derived from semi-structured interviews with adolescents between the ages of fifteen and seventeen at a Danish Boarding school – Dronninglund Efterskole – as well as, data obtained during exploratory online research from adolescent users of the Social Media platform of Tumblr.

In the following chapter, the methodological considerations of this research is presented and discussed, in which the interviewees from Dronninglund Efterskole is also presented. Following the methodological chapter is the theoretical chapter in which the theoretical considerations for this thesis are presented. After the theoretical chapter, the analysis is presented, in which themes and quotes from the semi-structured interviews, as well as, from the online exploratory research are discussed. The final chapter will present conclusions and findings based on the research of this master thesis.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Bryman (2012) and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that social researchers approach the world with a framework that determines certain problematics which they then research in specific ways. Thus, they point out that in order to gather knowledge on and investigate these *problematics*, specific relevant methods are used. Therefore, this chapter will entail the methodological considerations on which this thesis takes its point of departure and will, as such, discuss the philosophy of science paradigm, as well as, the applied methods and data collection.

### 2.1. PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE PARADIGM

As the main objective of this research is to construct knowledge about how adolescents engage in humanitarianism, it hence, focuses on aspects of adolescence and adolescent choice regarding the ways in which they engage in humanitarianism. Before such knowledge can be acquired through research, it is, moreover, essential to clarify how the researcher of this thesis understands reality as this stance the conduction of research in several ways (Bryman, 2012: Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: Olsen & Pedersen, 2008). How this stance – i.e. the perception of reality and the relationship between theory and knowledge – is perceived is referred to as *Philosophy of Science Paradigm*, which revolves around determining the underlying structure of science (Bryman, 2012: Olsen & Pedersen, 2008). Thus, Philosophy of Science Paradigm can be viewed as way of describing and determining the ways in which research is conducted and

carried out. However, according to Bryman (2012), O'donoghue (2006) and Olsen and Pedersen (2008) it is essential to note that it is not a matter of picking the correct stance, but merely to follow the guidelines of the stance that is most relevant to the subject of the research in question. In other words, the stance or paradigm is used to guide how the researcher approaches the world.

As this thesis mainly concerns itself with social phenomena/construction of humanitarian engagement from a Western viewpoint, it reflects a social constructivist stance, and will, thus, be guided by the constructivist paradigm.

According to Bryman (2012) *constructivism* – also referred to as *constructionism* (the term constructivism is predominantly used in this thesis) – “asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors”, thus, Bryman implies that not only is social phenomena constructed through social interaction, but they are also in a constant state of change (p.33). Other researchers similarly assert that a constructivist stance is a way of “interpreting different aspects of social life as they were constructed through and given meaning through social processes” (Caruna, 2007, p.295: Guba, 1990: Olsen & Pedersen, 2008).

Hence, humanitarian engagement is argued to be a social construct in the sense that it can be viewed as being accomplished and given meaning by social actors through social interaction, as well as in the assumption that humanitarian engagement is driven by more than one meaning or purpose (Musarò, 2011: Hyndman, 1998). As such, for this thesis, it is considered relevant to investigate the meanings that adolescents appoint and derive from humanitarian engagement from a constructivist stance.

Relating to this is the ontological perspective of this thesis. Within Philosophy of Science, *Ontology* is concerned with the nature of social entities – i.e. the nature of reality and knowledge. According to Bryman (2012) the central point of orientation for ontology is the question of “whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can

and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors” (p. 32).

Objectivism is an ontological position that asserts that “social phenomena confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence” (Bryman, 2012, p.32) In contrast to this, the ontological stance of this thesis is social constructivism as it takes its point of departure in the notion that “the only reality the researcher or student can perceive is an interpreted reality which is a product of the particular paradigm or language game that constitutes his or her worldview (Olsen & Pedersen, 2008, p.150). In other words, people construct their own reality in understanding the world based on their own beliefs and attitudes (Bryman, 2012: Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: Guba, 1990). Thus, a researcher working from this stance will always present a specific version of reality, which implies that there is no such thing as a definite social reality. In relation to this, Bryman (2012) argue that within constructivism, knowledge is perceived as indeterminate. Furthermore as knowledge is viewed as indefinite, social constructivists argue that reality is constructed through social interaction and thus, there is no such thing as a definitive truth (Bryman, 2012: Meiland & Krausz, 1982: Olsen & Pedersen, 2008). In other words, there is no correct or incorrect construction or perception of reality, as this differs from person to person.

In relation to the nature of truth, the following section will present the epistemological viewpoint of this thesis. According to Bryman (2012), *Epistemology* concerns itself with the nature of truth and “what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline” (p.27). Guba (1990) furthermore, defines it as a question of the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known.

Bryman (2012) and Lincoln (1990) argue that in contrast to a positivistic stance that represents a subject-object dualism; social constructivism represents an epistemological approach of interactive monism. According to Lincoln (1990) this is reflected in the “interactivity between researcher and researched” and, hence, in the learning process and acquirement of knowledge in the interaction between the researcher and his or her research subjects (p.78). As such, the epistemological stance of this thesis

reflects the notion that both the researcher and the research subjects are part of the knowledge construction process. In other words, this reflects that the worldview of both the researcher and the research subjects will affect the methods and results of this thesis.

In relation to this, Bryman (2012) argues that within qualitative research, the researcher takes on the role of an instrument regarding the data collection and will, as such, consequently influence the process. However, Bryman further explains that as a social constructivist, it is not a matter of aiming to exclude the researchers influence and interpretations as knowledge and reality is understood as a construction by both the researcher and the research subjects.

## 2.2 APPLIED METHODOLOGY

This section of the methodological considerations for this thesis presents the more practical methodological processes of this thesis as it concerns the procedures and techniques used to conduct research (Bryman, 2012: Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Thus, this section will present the applied methods as well as data collection.

As previously mentioned, this thesis is a qualitative research of adolescent humanitarian engagement, and has taken a hermeneutic approach, as this approach allows the researcher to interpret data and research within the context of the whole research (Bryman, 2012: Thompson, 1981). In other words, the hermeneutic approach enables understanding and analysis achieved through iteration between parts and the whole. Guba (1990) explains that this means that the gaining of knowledge is a process in which the researcher iterates between newly gained knowledge and prior known knowledge throughout the research. This model is followed to some extent, however not completely, throughout the thesis, but primarily in the analysis of the collected data, as this enables a constant possibility for revision and interpretation of knowledge. As such, the data analysis will be constructed through a constant iteration between the collected data and the theoretical framework.

As previously established, this section will account for the practical methods used in this thesis to collect data and construct knowledge on adolescent humanitarian engagement, however, as Denzin and Lincoln (2008) and Bryman (2012) opines that there is no such thing as a "correct" or "ultimate" method, it is a matter of considering applying the methods most appropriate in relation to the topic at hand. Thus, it is arguable that different methods have different strengths, and, hence, enable different results. As this thesis takes a social constructivist stance, knowledge and data is constructed through the use of qualitative methods. Bryman and Denzin and Lincoln state that qualitative research is employed within several different branches in the social sciences and is often guided by the use of different methods such as structured or semi structured interviews, observations, focus groups etc. According to Bryman, qualitative research usually "emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (2010, p.714).

As such, this thesis employs different methods in its construction of knowledge and the collection of data. First of all, secondary research, also referred to as desk research, was conducted early in the research process on existing research and knowledge relating to the topic of this thesis (Bryman, 2012). In the exploratory phase, online exploratory research was conducted through the use of a personal Social Media platform, and finally semi-structured interviews were conducted for the collection of data. In this regard, it is, however, important to mention that although the semi-structured interviews provide the primary data for the data analysis, results from the online research will also be applied in order to add to the analysis, as well as, further the intercultural aspect of this thesis. Furthermore, visual support for the data analysis is also included in the form of pictures and figures, however, this is not considered a "method" in this thesis, as these do not influence the findings of the data collection, but merely help illustrate the findings.

These methodological steps in the research process are illustrated in the following figure and will be further discussed in the following sections:





**Figure 1:** The methodological steps of the research process.

### 2.2.1 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

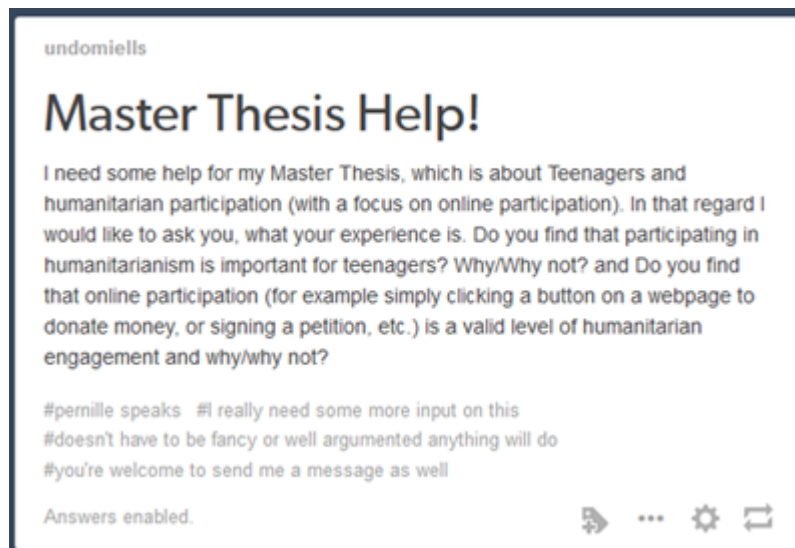
According to Bryman (2012) and Stebbins (2008) exploratory research, as the name denotes, is most often conducted in order for researchers to explore a certain subject and to familiarize themselves with it. Thus, this thesis employs exploratory research in order to discover certain relevant and meaningful concepts and areas of adolescent humanitarian engagement together with secondary research, also referred to as desk research. However, some of the comments collected in this process will also be applied in the data analysis to provide a comparative backdrop to some extent to the primary data collected in the semi-structured interviews.

In the exploratory phase, online research was conducted through the use of a personal blog of the researcher on the social networking site of Tumblr. Tumblr is a microblogging platform that allows users to post multimedia and original content. Furthermore, Tumblr constitutes a content community in the sense that users are encouraged to follow other blogs, and much of the site's features are accessed from an interface called the "dashboard", in which content is posted, and where posts and content from other bloggers can be viewed (Boutin, 2009).

Usually, such online research is referred to as netnography – i.e. a combination of the words internet and ethnography – and constitutes a rather contemporary research method, in which online behaviour of

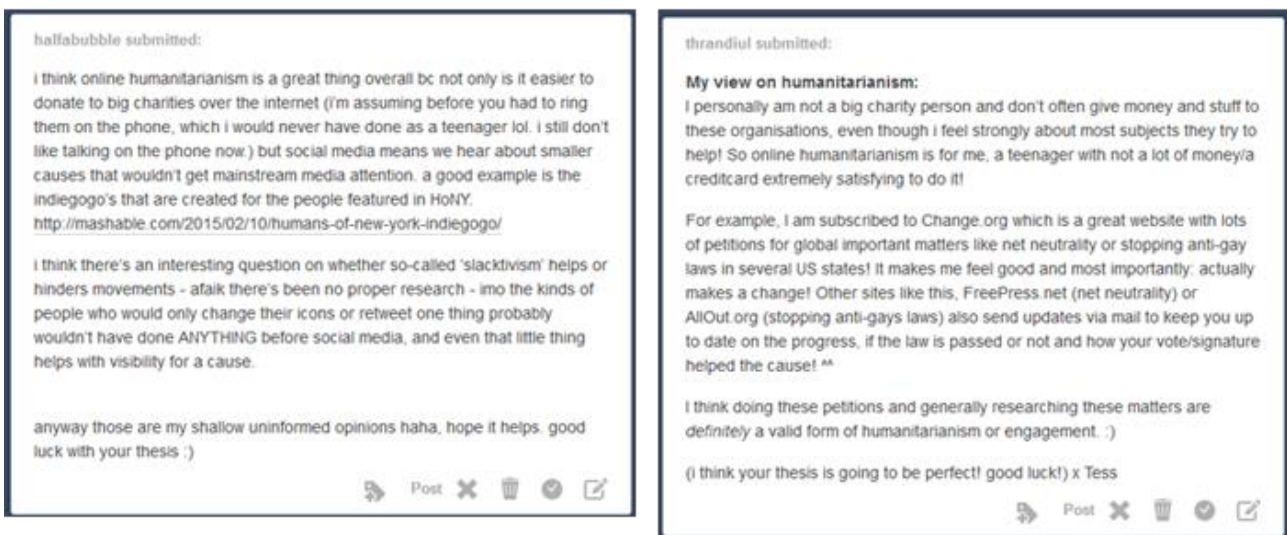
individuals are analysed, often in correlation with consumers and consumption behaviours (Bryman, 2012: Hogg et al., 2007). However, as the method in this thesis does not adhere to the criteria of netnography – i.e. being of low volume of comments, no structure or programme in collecting or counting the comments – the method will be referred to as *online exploratory research* in this research (Bryman, 2012: Hogg et al., 2007: Kozinets, 2010).

The researcher of this thesis chose to use Tumblr due to its global and diverse “population” of users, as well as, its relevance for the topic of online engagement. At the moment of this research process, the personal blog is followed by 1931 people of varying age, and thus, the researcher used it to post questions regarding adolescent humanitarian engagement in order to discover adolescents’ opinions on online engagement and what humanitarianism is about for them – As such, questions were formulated to only be directed at adolescent users. Users were able to comment on the post directly, however, most chose to send the researcher a message (most directly, but some anonymously).



**Picture 1:** Example of post on Tumblr regarding adolescent humanitarian engagement.

All in all, the researcher received twenty seven messages regarding the post from boys and girls ranging in age from fifteen to nineteen and from different nationalities (mostly European and American). The messages varied in length from seventy nine words to three hundred nine words, and averaged on hundred forty seven words, and consequently the quality differed in the messages, however, most were very well thought out and well-presented and most of the messages were extremely useful to discover different opinions and thoughts on the subject. As there were only twenty seven messages in all, this is an example of how this method does not fulfil the traditional criteria of traditional netnography.



Picture 2 & 3: Examples of the messages received.

The data collected in these messages was analysed by creating a data matrix in order to create an overview of the messages, as well as, in order to discover themes and aspects to be included in the theoretical framework, as the messages provided examples of what humanitarianism means to adolescents and their thoughts on how they understand online engagement. The themes discovered in this process mainly revolved around perceived benefits and disadvantages of online engagement compared to "traditional" engagement methods for adolescents and the use of Social Media in humanitarianism, as well as different factors that might influence adolescent interest and engagement in humanitarianism – e.g. parental influence, lack of resources, social ability etc. These themes were then in turn used as inspiration together

with the secondary research to uncover relevant theories and concepts for the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework which follows this chapter is divided up into four overarching sections of the – *The Characteristics of Humanitarianism, Social Media in Humanitarianism, Being Adolescent, and Adolescent Engagement*. These four segments and what they entail will be further accounted for in the introductory paragraph of the theoretical framework.

The data matrix that was constructed from the exploratory online research can be found on the CD included in this thesis. As not every commenter pointed out the same aspects, not every row or column in the matrix is filled out. Furthermore, selected comments that are applied throughout the data analysis will be included in the appendix of this thesis.

### 2.2.2 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

For the collection of primary data for this thesis, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Danish adolescents between the ages of fifteen and seventeen at Dronninglund Efterskole – a Danish boarding school that holds 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In this regard, it is essential to note that the researcher realises that obtaining data from a single source can be considered to affect the reliability and credibility of the data collected, as such, if interviewees had been conducted at several different schools, the resulting data may have been more thick and diverse.

As previously mentioned, different methods of data collection have in turn different strengths and According to Bryman (2012) the strength of the semi-structured interview is exactly that, the fact that it is *semi* structured. Bryman states that this form of interview lies between the standardised responses of structured interviews and the more free responses of unstructured interviews. Hence, it allows the researcher to guide the interview on basis of the theoretical framework, yet it also opens up possibilities for clarifying questions and follow-up questions and, thus, enables a more in-depth and flowing conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this regard, Kvale (1996) defines the goal of semi-structured interviews as obtaining perspectives on the world of the interviewees in order to discover

the meanings behind these perspectives. As such, this form of interview allows the researcher to detect trends and patterns, but also the mechanisms behind these trends and patterns (Bryman, 2012: Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: Kvale, 1996).

In this regard, contrary to quantitative research – e.g. survey research – qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to attempt to analyse not just how people behave the way they do, but why (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). Thus, in relation to this thesis, the goal is to construct knowledge about the underlying patterns and behaviours of why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement.

Duncombe and Jessop (2002) stress the importance of the conversation element in qualitative interviews as it is important to build a sense of trust and friendship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The researcher of this thesis is well out of her adolescent years; however, as she has gone through this period she is still able to relate to some extent, furthermore, she attended the same boarding school for two years. Thus, it is arguable that the role of the researcher in this scenario is both emic and etic to some extent (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002: Punch, 1998). However, as this thesis takes a social constructivist stance, it is important to stress that the aim is not to make generalisations, but to present a multi-varied perspective on how adolescents engage in humanitarianism. Furthermore, Kvale (1996) further argues that the data collected through this method is subjective as it depends on the researcher's interpretation; however, this is in accordance with the social constructivist stance of this thesis.

In accordance with a hermeneutic approach, Rubin and Rubin (2012) state that each time one repeats the data collection process, and in turn analyse and test the method, the researcher comes "closer to a clear and convincing model of the phenomenon [in question]" (p.47). Therefore, qualitative interviewing is further argued to be an iterative method. In other words, conducting interviews over time will enable the construction of more relevant knowledge, in the sense that the researcher is able to continually discover the most insightful and fruitful ways in which to conduct the interviews. Thus, the interview guide is a

process in and of itself. This iterative process is clearly reflected in the duration of the interviews of this thesis, as the first three interviews conducted proved to be shorter in duration than the latter conducted interviews. In other words, the first few interviews conducted proved beneficial in the sense that they enabled the researcher to discover how to better approach the subject of adolescent humanitarian engagement with the interviewees.

As a result of the data collection being an iterative process, the interview guide is not fully complete in the sense that it only contains the main questions derived from the theoretical framework, and not every single question posed during the interview process (an example of the interview guide is found in Appendix I). In other words, due to the interviews being semi-structured, the interview guide is merely that – i.e. a guide (Bryman, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Therefore, not all follow up questions or clarifying question are presented in the interview guide as these happen spontaneously during the interview process (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Furthermore, as mentioned in the *Paradigm of Science* section the construction of knowledge is a mutual process between the researcher and the interviewees, thus, the researcher of this thesis often reflects openly on her own thoughts on the subject, as well as on what has been said in the interview. In this regard, the researcher also attempts to ask questions in such a way as not to lead the interviewees to believe that there is a “right” or “wrong” answer. (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Gorman and Clayton (2005) refer to this type of approach as being a reflective listener, as this enables the researcher to better understand and clarify what is really said in the interview process.

#### 2.2.2.1 THE INTERVIEWEES

All in all, twelve interviews were conducted at Dronninglund Efterskole over the course of three weeks. Seven girls and five boys participated in the interview process and all interviews were deemed successful in terms of recording and communication. Although, one interview is of a slightly lower quality due to technical errors during recording, however, not enough to exclude it from the research. Thus, all the conducted interviews are, hence, included in the thesis. Most of the interviews were between twenty and thirty minutes in duration – the first three being shorter in duration as explained in the previous section,

due to the interview process also being an iterative process in which the interview guide is continually being revised. In this regard, it is, furthermore, vital to emphasise that the researcher acknowledges that more data in the form of more interviews or interviews of a longer duration may have resulted in more diverse, reliable and credible data.

Furthermore, the adolescents were interviewed in a secluded classroom in familiar settings at their school, which is argued to mean that the data collection process was not influenced by outside or unexpected factors. However, the researcher did sense levels of urgency in some of the adolescents, which may be a result of the interviews being conducted during the examination period at the school, which could be classified as an influencing factor.

In accordance with a constructivist stance, the researcher had not as her goal to interview a specific amount of adolescents, but rather as many as possible in this situation (Bryman, 2012; Kvale, 1996). Bryman (2012) argues that a constructionist researcher considers every person to be unique in the sense that people construct their own realities, thus, they each contribute unique knowledge in turn, which is in accordance with the goal of this thesis – i.e. not to generalise, but to present a varied perspective and construct varied knowledge on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement.

The interviewees that participated in this research was selected through *purposive sampling*, meaning the participants were chosen due to them being viewed as most relevant to the research topic, and not chosen at random (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). The researcher of this thesis chose to conduct the interviews at Dronninglund Efterskole in order to be able to interview adolescents considered to be in the “middle” of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. As mentioned previously, more interviewing could have been done at other school – for example with adolescents, who were slightly older than the ones at Dronninglund Efterskole in order to compare and contrast in the analysis. In relation to this, it would have been beneficial to have done more extensive research on Dronninglund Efterskole, as the researcher for example was not aware before the interviewing process begun that the 10<sup>th</sup> grade at the school is divided

up into different streams and that one of these is charity related. As such, implementing the method of focus group would perhaps have in turn generated more substantial interviewing.

Moreover, this thesis has as its goal to construct knowledge about Western adolescents' humanitarian engagement; however, it is arguably impossible to interview adolescents from each Western country as this would exceed the scope of this master thesis. However, as Denmark is considered a Western country, a Western viewpoint is argued to be presented in the viewpoints of the Danish adolescents. Furthermore, as the primary data will be supplied with data from the exploratory phase which mostly consists of American and European adolescents, the scope of this thesis will be intercultural to some extent. Moreover, as mentioned, the researcher attempts not to generalise but present varied and to some extent diverse perspectives on the research topic at hand.

The following table provides an overview of the interviewees in the research of this thesis:

Name	Grade & Age	Information about Humanitarian Engagement
Stine Gamborg	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Believes it is important to do good things for those without many resources and important to support "local" causes. Is a member of FDF and dreams of becoming a nurse in "Doctors without Borders". Started collection for teacher, whose husband died of cancer. Her family is not involved in charity consciously, and Stine does not feel influenced by her parents in this regard, she feels it's her "own thing".
Kasper Momme	9 <sup>th</sup> grade, 15 years old.	Charity is to give material help to those who need help. Wants to participate, yet rarely does mostly due to limitations of his age. His mother collects for the Danish Cancer Society due grandmother dying of cancer. Has not been involved in any charity projects, but is for active help supposed to financial help.
Josefine Hvarregaard	9 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Believes that charity is mostly financial aid, and has participated through FDF by mostly collecting. Would rather spend time on herself and her school than participate, but would like to go on a missionary trip with FDF when she is 18, mostly for the sake of the experience. Only engages with parents in charity if there is some sort of reward, and she has their support in wanting to go on the missionary trip.



Maibritt Lund	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 17 years old.	Member of the Global stream, but has not participated much in charity before. Feels it is important both personally and for DK to help those in need. Encouraged by her family to do good for others. Feels she has become empowered through the projects on the Global stream, through the relationships and experiences, as well as being able to pass her gained perspective and knowledge on.
Emilie Vestergaard	9 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Member of KFUM together with her family, and has participated in many different charity projects, both on her own and with KFUM. Has arranged a charity run with a school friend, and believes that as a fellow human being she has a responsibility to help where she can. She is very aware that she is privileged, and feels that she should share what she can.
Sofie Hansen	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Member of the Global stream, and has not really been interested in charity work before the experiences with the school. Her parents do not consciously engage in humanitarianism, but do when the occasion arises – e.g. door-to-door collections. She feels, however, that it has always been present in her upbringing, but that it is her own choice to take her engagement and interest further. Believes that experiences with helping underprivileged peers have been an eye opener.
Matilde Ejlertsen	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Member of the Global stream, wants to be a social worker and work with troubled kids and teenagers, feels that her experience with underprivileged peers in Palestine has furthered her interest in charity work as well as her dream of becoming a social worker. Her family do not consciously engage in humanitarianism, but do when the occasion arises – e.g. door-to-door collections. To her humanitarianism is helping someone who does not have a lot of resources, and the reward is the joy itself of helping those more unfortunate than oneself. Feels it is an obligation now that she has witnessed underprivileged peers.
Jonas Søvik	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 16 years old.	Feels that adolescence is not a time to engage in humanitarianism as they should focus on other things and may be too vulnerable, but still a good time to be introduced to the injustices of the world so that people can engage late in life. Feels that local and Danish causes are more relatable to him. Donates to the Danish Cancer Society as he has lost people to cancer. Has not participated in any charity projects through schools or other institutions. Thinks that it would be a good idea that donations to charity should be through taxes, as it would make it an integrated part of society and lessen the societal pressure to feel a certain way about humanitarianism.

Jesper Kalmar	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 17 years old.	Humanitarianism to Jesper is to use one's own resources to help others. He does not have an interest in charity work as he feels adolescence is meant for other things - his parents take care of that. His parents are of the sceptic kind and would rather donate to Danish or local causes, as they feel they are more trustworthy. He has participated in some charity projects – e.g. standing guard at “Danacup” where the proceeds go to “Børnefonden”, however, not on his own initiative.
Nikoline Krogh Pedersen	9 <sup>th</sup> grade, 17 years old.	Feels that engaging in humanitarianism is an obligation that fellow human beings have for each other. She donates a lot to Red Cross, and has written a school project on charity in which she arranged a charity run. Her family supports a Child in Africa, which Nikoline is very involved with. She feels very influenced and encouraged by her parents engagement and commitment, and wishes to do similar things when she is older – e.g. going on a missionary trip to Africa or supporting a Child in Africa.
Anton Madsen	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 17 years old.	He does not have much interest in engaging in humanitarianism, but is involved in some charity work through being a member of FDF together with his family. His family participates in the work connected with FDF, but not otherwise. Feels that FDF has inspired him to want to teach, maybe young people about outdoor life and activities. Feels that FDF has functioned as a refuge for him. Does not see the point in sending a lot of money to developing countries, and that people should go there instead and help actively in bettering the underprivileged lives.
Nicolai Danneboe	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, 17 years old.	Participates in charity work through FDF, and he believes that humanitarianism is about helping someone without necessarily gaining something from it itself. Does not participate much outside of FDF, but likes to engage himself through that as he especially enjoys being with peers, as well as the fact that he feels they see their results of the work they do in FDF. He further believes that it is important for adolescents to realise and become aware of how privileged they are, and realise that even though they do not have many resources, they are able to help and should help where they can, that they should realise the world is not only about them. Nicolai joined FDF because it is a tradition within his family; however, he stays because he wants to and not because he has too.

Before each interview, the interviewees were informed about the characteristics of the master thesis and what the goal of this research is, in order to avoid any harmful misunderstandings during the interviews and also to make sure that the adolescent was fully apprised of the process and what they were agreeing to (Bryman, 2012; Gorman & Clayton, 2005; Kvale, 1996). In this sense, all the participants were asked whether or not they wanted to be anonymous in the research, however, all of the interviewees chose not to be anonymous.

All of the interviews were conducted in Danish as this is the mother language of both the interviewer and the interviewees. Presumably, this proves to be an advantage as this enabled the adolescents to express and explain themselves to the best of their ability without complicating it with another non-native language, such as English. Presumably, by conducting the interviews in the mother language of both the interviewer and the interviewee, most communication problems were avoided, however, it is critical to be aware in the following translation process in order to produce the most valid translation. Danish quotes that are applied in the analysis are translated into English to the best of the researcher's ability, and these quotes (both original and translated) are found in Appendix II.

## 2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Contrary to quantitative analysis, qualitative data analysis is much more abstract than a definite science (Bryman, 2012). Bryman argues that there are various methods to analyse qualitative data – e.g. grounded theory or discourse analysis etc. Babbie (2007) states that there are no “cut-and-dry steps” which guarantees success in qualitative data analysis (p.384). This arguably implies that a researcher has to create or follow the most relevant process in order analyse the data in the best possible way.

Often qualitative researchers are able to make use of different programs to analyse data, especially if they have generated large amounts of data, however, in this master thesis, data is manually collected,

transcribed and analysed (Bryman, 2012). In this regard transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews and the creation of a Meta data matrix enabled structure of the data analysis.

All twelve interviews were recorded, which in turn enabled the researcher to focus completely on the ongoing interviews. Therefore, the method of transcription was applied in the following process in order to obtain structure and overview of the data, in order to discover themes and information on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement. The semi-structured interviews are transcribed in full, in order to be able to uncover all relevant segments of the interviews needed for the analysis – e.g. small-talk and the like are also transcribed as from a hermeneutic standpoint in the iteration process even small talk may prove to be useful data. Therefore, the researcher has a textual overview of all the interviews which are then transferred and structured into a data matrix, in order to enable the data analysis.

As established, this thesis takes a constructivist stance and, therefore, aims to construct varied knowledge based on the data collected (Bryman, 2012). Hence, the collected data is categorised and developed into a Meta matrix in order to create an overview of salient themes, as well as, to enable a structured analysis of these themes. In the data matrix, rows represent all the interviewees and the columns represent the different themes discovered during the data collection process. Thus, the researcher is able to detect patterns and surprises, and in turn, analyse the mechanics behind these patterns (Bryman, 2012). However, here it is essential to note that in accordance with Miles and Huberman (1994) the themes in the data matrix are not definitive, however, merely applied for structure and as a basis for the analysis of the qualitative data. All of the recordings, transcriptions as well as the data matrix is found on the CD included in this thesis.

The analysis is divided into two overarching segments. The first part of the analysis, *Humanitarian Engagement in Adolescence*, will discuss different aspects of adolescent humanitarian engagement and attempt to uncover different perspectives on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism. The second part of the analysis, *Online Engagement*, will discuss different aspects of online engagement and attempt to

uncover different perspectives on how adolescents understand online engagement. Quotes from both the exploratory online research and the data collection will be used throughout both parts of the analysis; hence, the researcher will distinguish between quotes from the international adolescents and quotes from the Danish adolescents. Furthermore, as mentioned, visual support for the data analysis is also included in the form of relevant pictures in order to help illustrate the data analysis.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

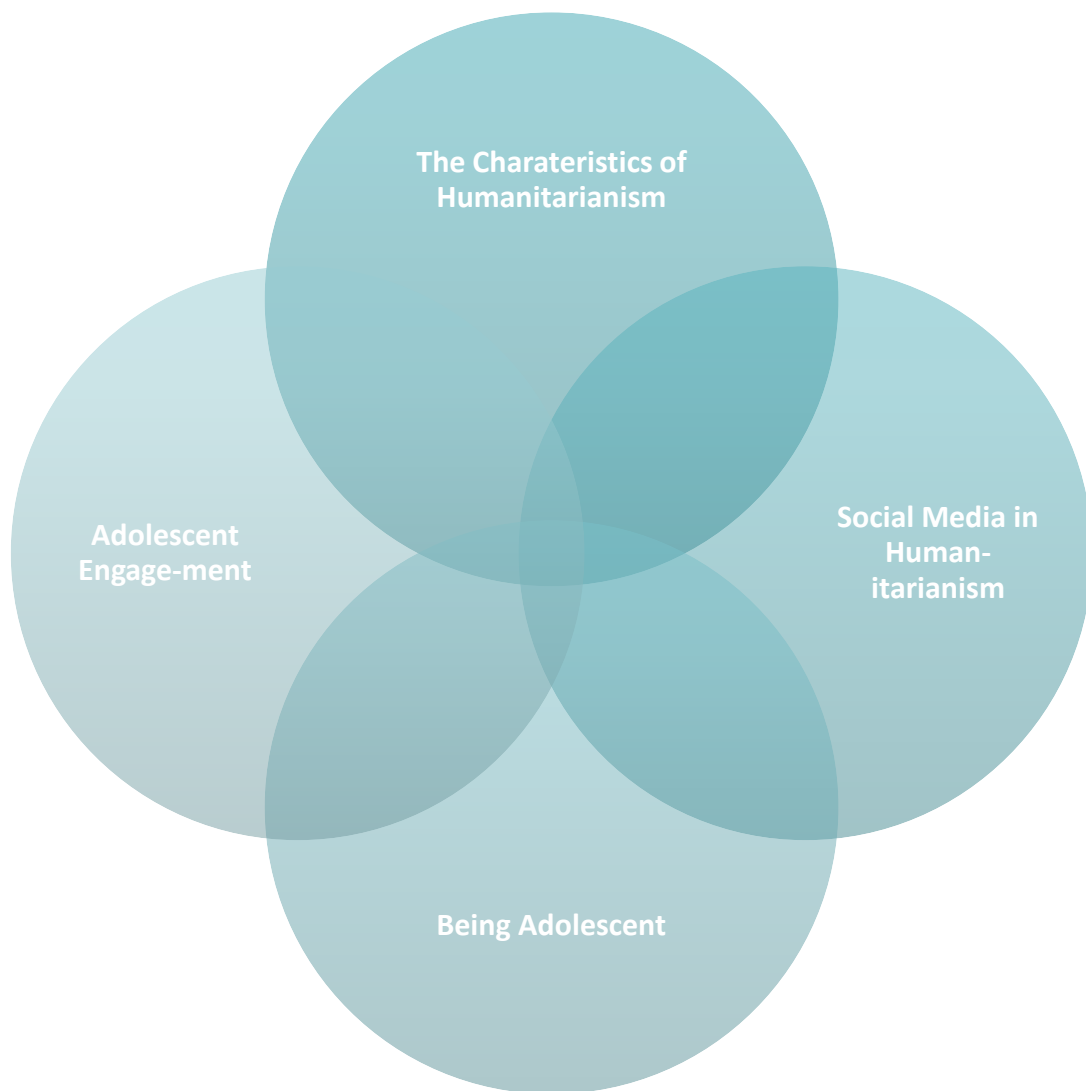
In order to investigate why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement, the following chapter will discuss various theories and concepts revolving around adolescents in connection with humanitarianism and the use of Social Media in humanitarianism.

When building a theoretical framework, the most immediate concern is which theories and concepts should be included? Bryman (2010) states that theories and concepts within the social sciences "are the way that we make sense of the social world" (p.8). In this regard, he further explains that it is theory and concepts that guide research – e.g. the questions which the interview guide of this thesis is made up of are based and derived from the concepts examined in this theoretical framework. Costley (2006) similarly explains that theories should be used as lenses to look through in order to make sense of what we see. Moreover, Loudon and Bella Ditta (1988) state that a theoretical framework should also function as to describe and explain the knowledge that already exists on said concepts.

Hence, the theoretical framework of this thesis is applied for its descriptive and explanatory function. The descriptive element functions to characterise the nature of a phenomenon – i.e. in this case in what ways adolescents engage in humanitarianism and in what ways Social Media is used in humanitarianism. The explanatory element in this case functions to uncover the possible underlying causes of adolescent engagement – i.e. why they engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement.

In order to uncover relevant theories and concepts about humanitarian engagement in adolescence, the researcher of this thesis chose to conduct secondary research, as well as, online exploratory research through the use of a Social Media platform (Tumblr). The outcome of these research methods uncovered different themes of adolescent engagement and the use of Social Media in humanitarianism. These themes were then, in turn, used as inspiration to uncover relevant concepts and theories to be examined in the theoretical framework. Firstly, as the name of the section on *The Characteristics of Humanitarianism* implies it will account for different aspects of humanitarianism and what this thesis refer to as methods of traditional engagement. The second segment, *Social Media in Humanitarianism*, characterises Social Media and its use as online engagement in humanitarianism. Thirdly, the section on *Being Adolescent* will revolve around different concepts and influences in adolescence. And finally, the fourth section, *Adolescent Engagement*, will entail different theories and concepts relating humanitarian engagement in adolescence.

These four overarching segments that make up the theoretical framework of this thesis, which is illustrated in the following figure, will hopefully together provide a cohesive framework which will enable a deeper understanding and analysis of why Western adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement. The following figure will also be presented as a concluding figure at the end of the theoretical framework with key concepts of the four different segments.



**Figure 2:** An overview of the four overarching segments of the theoretical framework.

### 3.1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMANITARIANISM

In order to investigate why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement, it is essential to obtain an understanding of the characteristics of humanitarianism and traditional engagement. As such, this first chapter of the theoretical framework will account for different views on humanitarianism and traditional methods of engagement.

There are differing views on what constitutes *humanitarianism*, and hence, as a term it is generally used to cover these different thoughts and views on its definition. However according to scholars such as Barnett and Weiss (2008), Kennedy (2002), Gierycz (2010), Donini (2010) and Vissing (2012) it essentially epitomises the stance that everyone in the world has basic rights simply due to being alive despite of race, creed or colour. Other scholars such as Boltanski (2001), Cohen (2001), Chouliaraki (2012), Dawes and Sheff (2012) and Vestergaard, (2009) stresses the notion that humanitarianism is the ethical practises of caring for distant strangers.

Thus, although there are differing views on humanitarianism there seems to be an agreement that at its roots humanitarianism revolves around the upholding of human rights and that it implies actions and obligations that are ethical in nature and global in reach.

According to Barnett (2011) and Vissing (2012) history reflects that humanitarianism has its origins in the belief in human equality which dates back to Aristotle. Vissing, furthermore, opines that the origins of practical actions of humanitarianism are often attributed to religious influences, namely the parable of *the Good Samaritan* and that the importance of humanitarian treatment of others rose “during the European period of Enlightenment in the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century” (2012, p.3). Similarly Dawes and Sheff (2012) opine that the modern notion of humanitarianism has evolved throughout history and that the concept of *charity* extends back to the emergence of major world religions. Dawes (2007) further argues that international crisis relief – e.g. responses to famine and natural disasters – on an organisational level dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Contrarily, Höijer (2004) argues that the modern notion of humanitarianism as it is understood today originates in the human rights movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – namely, the suffragette movement and the civil rights movement.

These varying thoughts and views on humanitarianism and its origins are in turn reflected in the diverseness of humanitarian activity and practise both on a civic and organisational level. On an organisational and governmental level humanitarian activity ranges from “small non-profit organisations providing targeted food aid in times of famine to massive state-led peacekeeping interventions into civil



conflicts” (Dawes & Sheff, 2012, p.3: Evans, 2008: Forsythe, 2005). However, as the main objective of this thesis is to uncover possible reasonings as to why adolescents engage in humanitarianism, focus will be on civic forms of humanitarian assistance.

There exists a multitude of civic humanitarian activities both on a local and global scale and they vary greatly in terms of level of engagement and methods (Barnett, 2011). These activities are mostly carried out through a collective effort through institutions such as, schools, churches, shelters, hospitals and NGOs of varying size (Dawes & Sheff, 2012: Vestergaard, 2008). Scholars such as Dawes (2007), Evans (2008) and Forsythe (2005) argue that as humanitarianism implies such diverse forms of action, anything from volunteering to donating or raising money can be classified as humanitarian assistance, as level of engagement and resources can vary. Vissing (2012) further argues that civic humanitarian assistance can take several forms, even smaller scale gestures such as giving food or money to a homeless person or collecting for a local sports club, as she opines that humanitarianism is essentially an ethical provision of “kindness, benevolence, concern, empathy, moral obligation, and sympathy” (p.3). Norris (2001) argues that levels and methods of civic engagement in humanitarianism varies individually and may depend on several factors and issues – e.g. level of political and humanitarian interest, amount of personal resources and free time, as well as demographical factors such as age and educational background. One can argue that these factors that Norris notes play an essential role in humanitarian engagement in adolescence as factors such as amount of resources, free-time and interest may dictate whether or not adolescents engage in humanitarianism.

### 3.1.1 POST-HUMANITARIANISM

As touched upon in the introduction of this thesis, within recent years a new wave of humanitarianism is emerging that the scholar Chouliaraki (2010) has coined as *Post-Humanitarianism*. The post-humanitarian trend reflects a shift from emotion-oriented campaigning by humanitarian organisations, to more technologised and aestheticised oriented forms of campaigning which also focuses on de-emotionalising

causes (Madianou, 2013: Orgad, 2013 Vestergaard, 2008, Wan, 2012). This trend is also characterised by an increase in the use of the internet and Social Media within humanitarian work over the last decade (Bennet, 2003: Cottle & Nolan, 2007: Silverstone, 2006: Mikami & Nolan, 2012: Richey, 2012). Scholars such as Chouliaraki (2010:2012), Frosh & Pinchevski (2008), Vestergaard (2009) and White (2010) argue that the emergence of technologised and aestheticised campaigning have resulted in an increase of online engagement, which is heavily debated by scholars and the media as to its use and level of legitimacy. Online engagement and the use of Social Media will be further accounted for in the following chapter.

### 3.2 SOCIAL MEDIA IN HUMANITARIANISM

As introduced at the beginning of the theoretical framework, this segment will attempt to characterise Social Media and its use as online engagement in humanitarianism. Therefore, this chapter will describe and explain the characteristics of Social Media and different concepts and theories relating to its use as online engagement.

According to McQuail (2010) the term *Social Media* refers to social networking sites, and he states that as the name denotes, is comprised of various different internet websites that functions to enable and encourage people to create online networks and share information, that is often public. As such, McQuail defines Social Media in terms of internet websites that functions as social networking. However, scholars such as Hansen et al. (2011) and Harris (2009) argue that social networking is simply one of many different platforms that the overarching term Social Media is comprised of. Harris opines that there are a myriad of different Social Media platforms – i.e. social networking, text messaging, sharing photos, podcasts, streaming videos, wikis, blogs, discussion groups etc. He, however, agrees with McQuail that most of these platforms are comprised of or linked with internet websites. In this regard, Andersen and Wolf (2010) and Crittenden et al. (2011) also note the importance of mobile devices as well in accessing and keeping informed of the myriad of different Social Media platforms that exists.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) and Crittenden et al. (2011) argue that the concept of Social Media has its origins in the system *Usenet*, which was developed in the late 70es and early 80es by Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University. Usenet was a discussion system that enabled people to post public messages on the internet via a system resembling a bulletin board, and is, thus, considered to be the forerunner to the internet forums that we know today. However, they further explain that the era of Social Media as it is understood today began in the late 90es with the development of one of the first social networking sites, *Open Diary*, an online networking site that functioned as a community for online diary writers. The concept of online networking continued with the ever expanding public access to the Internet and gained major popularity with the development of sites like *Myspace* and *Facebook* in the mid 2000s. The creation of these sites led to the coining of the term Social Media and since then several new Social Media platforms has emerged – for example YouTube, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Wikipedia and virtual worlds such as Second Life etc.

Furthermore, according to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) Social Media is most often and commonly defined in its differences and links to the related concepts of Web 2.0 and User Generated Content (UGC). Web 2.0 is a term first used in 2004, which refers to:

a new way in which software developers and end-users started to utilise the World Wide Web: that is, as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009, pp. 60-61).

As such, Kaplan and Haenlein and Crittenden et al. consider Web 2.0 as the platform for the progression of Social Media by arguing that Web 2.0 represents the ideological and technological basis of it, whereas the concept of UGC can be defined as the ways in which people use Social Media. Hence, according to Kaplan and Haenlein Social Media is defined as “a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (2009, p. 61).

With the rise of interactive digital technologies and use of Social Media, several new opportunities have in turn arisen for individuals, companies, organisations and NGOs alike. Crittenden et al. (2011), Garretson (2008) and Walmsley (2010) argue that in recent years Social Media have become an essential and integrated part of everyday life in many aspects as we use it to communicate and navigate our everyday life. They further argue that as a result of this, companies and organisations worldwide are also discovering the usability and potential of Social Media – especially in regards to communication and marketing strategies.

Crittenden et al., Garretson and Walmsley further argue that this rise have also revolutionised marketing, advertising and promoting and fundamentally altered what they refer to as marketing's ecosystem of influence, by furthering company and consumer interaction. The many different Social Media platforms have in recent years proved to be a must for companies and organisations worldwide in creating awareness, driving sales and enabling two-way interactions with consumers, hence, it is arguably evident that Social Media platforms are changing marketing, and that "the nature and sources of information and connectivity are vast, in effect creating a 24/7 collaborative world" (Crittenden et al., 2011, p.267: Singh, 2005: Walmsley, 2010). According to Crittenden et al. and Karpinski (2005) modern consumers of Social Media have been empowered by technology, and are organised and intelligent people who are more trusting of their own opinions and those of their peers. In this regard Hansen (2011) argues that this empowerment of consumers is referred to as *bottom-up* marketing and occurs due to the fact that "billions of people create trillions of connections through Social Media each day" (p.3). Crittenden et al. explains that these connections result in a vast and diverse social network that in effect operates as a consumer marketplace. This new and evolving consumer marketplace also referred to as the Social Media ecosystem have resulted in the marketplace no longer revolving around messages, but instead conversations (Crittenden et al., 2011: Levine et al., 2001). Crittenden et al., Garretson and Walmsley, therefore argue that to engage consumers, marketers must treat consumers as active participants instead of mere bystanders as they now expect to be active participants.

As have been established, Social Media platforms are argued to have enabled a deeper and more interactive contact between consumer and company, which have resulted in a change in the dynamics of marketing interchange and interaction. These dynamics have changed due to the fact that “today, consumers actively influence brand messages and meaning, consumer opinions help dictate product and service assortment, mobile devices represent communication lifelines, and online “chatter” serves as a crystal ball that helps companies determine future product or service initiatives (Crittenden et al., 2011, p.268). Therefore, Crittenden et al., Garretson and Walsmley argue that the use of Social Media platforms enables both reach and engagement, and that marketers “need both people and community platforms in order to create experiences that achieve the overarching goal of attention and influence” (Crittenden et al., 2011, p.268). In this regard they, thus, argue that the concept of Social Media has transformed the internet from a platform of information to a platform of influence.

According to Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) and Karpinski (2005), several companies and organisations worldwide have begun utilising social networking sites as communication and information channels to help create and sustain brand communities, as well as, marketing research and netnography. Moreover, according Chouliaraki (2010) and Vestergaard (2008) the humanitarian organisation industry has also begun utilising Social Media platforms in their humanitarian work. The social platforms most often utilised in one way or another within humanitarianism – be it by an individual, organisation or a NGO – are blogs (e.g. WordPress.com or Tumblr), content communities (e.g. YouTube) and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn) (Chouliaraki, 2010; Madianou, 2013). As already established, the act of blogging is commonly considered to be the earliest Social Media platform and blogs are:

special types of websites that usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order (...) [and] are the Social Media equivalent of personal web pages and can come in a multitude of different variations, from personal diaries describing the author’s life to summaries of all relevant information in one specific content area (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009, p. 63; OECD, 2007)

Furthermore, blogs usually represent one individual; however, most blogging platforms also enable interaction through the addition of a commenting or messaging system, also being mostly made available to the public on the internet, blog posts can often initiate and encourage interaction through discussion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Evans, 2010: ). Therefore, blogs are used to inform and update by individuals, however, companies and organisations have also begun using blogs as part of their corporate system – e.g. to improve transparency or update employees etc. Hence, as a Social Media platform, blogs can function to update, create awareness on a certain topic and inform people and, thus, results in all forms of information and opinions being available to the public online (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009).

Content communities are commonly defined as online communities which share all sorts of (media) content between users – e.g. sharing videos on YouTube or sharing pictures on Instagram etc. – and are most often not required to create a personal profile; however, it is becoming more popular to do so. This type of platform is becoming especially essential for many organisations and companies as content communities can function as a platform for sharing and the distribution of advertising, recruiting and information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009; Evans, 2010).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein, social networking sites are “applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other” (2009, p.63). These sites and profiles can contain any type of information and media (e.g. videos, pictures, blog posts etc.) and have become extremely popular – namely among adolescents (Commins et al., 2010; Evans, 2010; Schau & Gilly 2003).

According to Madianou (2013), ever since the Haiti earthquake that occurred in January 2010, humanitarian campaigners and organisations have begun to utilise Social Media “to reach potential donors and to raise awareness for their causes” as “within hours from the devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake Social Media and crowdsourcing software such as Ushahidi were employed in order to provide information

about missing people, casualties and medical need” (2013, pp.1-2). As such, it is argued that this event provided ample proof that Social Media had great potential and could be utilised in humanitarianism in several ways.

Moreover, Madianou argues that there are several possible strong reasons or arguments not to dismiss the potential of the use of Social Media in humanitarianism, and that one of the main “attractions” of Social Media is the “combination of increased audience reach together with a high degree of disintermediation” (2013, p.2). In this regard, Boyd (2010) further supports this notion by stating that humanitarian campaigners and organisations can reach a more vastly networked public, and, hence, dispose with the traditional powerful intermediaries – i.e. media corporations and other gatekeepers. Madianou and Boyd argue that “this disintermediation can have implications for the visibility of social causes and campaigns – bringing to light situations that might have previously remained concealed” by the traditional news media (Madianou, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, as Social Media enables “peer-to-peer communication and the involvement of citizen journalists and even of the sufferers themselves” it can potentially enable and increase a higher degree of authenticity, engagement and legitimacy of humanitarian campaigns and, thus, Social Media can be viewed as *sites of witnessing* (Madianou, 2013, p.2: Boyd, 2010: Frosh & Pinchevski, 2009). Thus, one can argue that the most attractive element of the use of Social Media in humanitarianism “is the assumption that the mediation of suffering through Social Media favours action” – i.e. consumers of Social Media in this regard are perceived as active participants, responding and being involved for a cause (Madianou, 2013, p.2: Boyd, 2010).

In recent years, Social Media platforms have been and are continually being involved in political events and humanitarian movements – e.g. the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street etc. – which have all been branded as Social Media revolutions. Although, some scholars and researchers are sceptical – e.g. Morozov (2010) and Sreberny et al. (2010), others such as Madianou, Boyd, Papacharissi and Oliveara (2012) and Chouliaraki (2010) argue that these Social Media revolutions provide evidence that suggest that potentially “Social Media have a transformative role to play in the coordination of civic action” (Madianou, 2013, p.2)

In this regard, McQuail (2010) states that “most media use can be as sociable or not as one chooses, depending on our real-life resources (in terms of money, mobility, available friends and social contacts)” this is referred to as *interaction potential*, and is especially applicable for the use of Social Media, in the sense that “in providing a substitute to “real-life” social contact, which might simply not be available, especially in modern urban living, [Social Media] often help to alleviate loneliness and stress caused by isolation” (McQuail, 2010, p.436: Rosengren & Windahl, 1972). The concept of interaction potential may be especially applicable in relation to adolescents regarding their resources or lack thereof. It is arguable that adolescents do not have the same material and immaterial resources ready available as adults do, and as such, one could question whether or not the same “standards” should apply to them regarding their level of humanitarian engagement? Is it valid to argue that using Social Media to engage in humanitarianism is “lazy” if there is no other method or resource available to them?

Drumbl (2012), Siegel (2012), Waldorf (2012) and Gamson and Sifry (2013) are critical of the emerging humanitarian trend of utilising Social Media, and refer to it as *Slacktivism* or *Clicktivism*, and as the name denotes, the common argument revolves around the notion that online participation does not encourage long-term engagement or present an authentic level of humanitarian engagement.

Halupka (2014) and Morozov (2009) argue that the term *Clicktivism* is a demonised label in academic discourse for the simplification of the engagement process. The term is most commonly utilised to denote “the simplification of online participatory processes: online petitions, content sharing, social buttons (e.g. Facebook’s “Like” button)”, and as such, clicktivism is perceived as a derogatory term encouraging the idea that “the streamlining of online processes has created a societal disposition toward feel good, “easy” activism” (Halupka, 2014, p.115: Morozov, 2009).

Drumbl, Siegel and Waldorf argue that there is a prevalent concern that Social Media platforms have made online engagement, or what they refer to as clicktivism, too effortless. Karpf (2010) argues that the concern stems in a fear that this effortless type of engagement will have long-term implications for the



public sphere, “either by further dispiriting the issue publics who find their online petitions and e-comments ignored, or by crowding out more substantive participatory efforts” (p.9).

Furthermore, as opposed to Madianou’s (2013) notion of the possible benefits of utilising Social Media as *sites of witnessing*, Shulman (2009) argues that online participation and Social Media offers up “low-quality, redundant, and generally insubstantial commenting by the public,” (p. 25). Thus, Shulman argues that this type of engagement and participation does little to influence humanitarian causes, and instead crowds out more substantive participation, which in turn results in a weakening of humanitarian action and negative implications for citizen engagement.

Following this perspective, online participation can be argued to be a too convenient or lazy level of engagement compared to the level of effort and legitimacy of traditional engagement. Karpf, however argues that acts of online participation merely represents an alternative online equivalent to traditional “offline” acts of participation, and that these online acts represent a “difference-of-degree rather than a difference-in-kind” (p.7).

### 3.3 BEING ADOLESCENT

Scholars Bosma et al. (1996), Callan and Noller (1991) and Steinberg (1990) opine that adolescence is defined as the period of transition from childhood to adulthood, which is characterised as a time in which significant changes and developments occur for the adolescent. According to Bosma et al. (1996) and Collins (1990), these changes are both physical and psychological in nature and most often develop between the ages of eleven and twenty. In this regard, Bosma et al. (1996) opine that “more account has to be taken of the adolescents’ thoughts and ideas (...) New social needs and aims have to be accepted [and] increasingly, the adolescent has to be given room to make decisions about personal plans and aspirations”, therefore, it is argued to be essential to recognise the implications of these changes as they influence not only the life of the adolescent, but also the dynamics of the family (p. 277). Furthermore, researcher Flanagan (2003) opines that the evolving values and worldviews of adolescents are “a fruitful arena for

understanding the kinds of people they are becoming and the kind of polity they will create as younger generations replace their elders in society” (p.2). Thus, it is argued that all of these changes, new thoughts, social aims and aspirations may in this regard influence and develop adolescents’ thoughts on social and political justice as well as their interest in civic engagement.

Adolescents’ thoughts and level of interest in humanitarianism and civic engagement may also depend upon another aspect that characterises the period of adolescence, namely the changing in family dynamics as mentioned above. According to scholars Smetana (1995) and Morris and Steinberg (2001) the period of adolescence is characterised by an ongoing process of changing conceptions of parental authority and adolescent autonomy. In this regard, it is interesting to examine whether or not, or how much parental authority influences adolescents in their decision making relating humanitarian interest and engagement. Following this, Eccles and Gootman (2001) and Flanagan (2003) suggest that the personal values of adolescents’ and those they have adopted from their families – i.e. parents’ worldviews and the way in which they admonish their children to relate to other people – serve as a basis for developing their social and political views. Jennings (1991) defines values as standards by which one judges behaviour, and foundations for how one organises ones worldviews. Flanagan (2003) argues that as adolescents “grapple with a direction for their lives, they make assessments of who they are and what they stand for including where they stand on social and political issues” (p.5). Thus, the construction of identity and values is argued to be central in the development of social and political stances in adolescence. In this regard, parental or familial values may to some extent determine the humanitarian views and opinions of adolescents, and in turn, influence their level of interest and engagement in humanitarianism.

Moreover, some scholars such as Flanagan (2003), Brady et al. (1995), McLellan et al. (1997) and Smith (1999) opine that there is a link between joining extracurricular activities and organisations in adolescence and level of civic engagement and interest in adulthood as longitudinal studies have shown that “extensive *connections* to others through family, religious institutions, and extracurricular activities [are] significantly related to political and civic involvement in young adulthood” (Flanagan, 2003, p.2). Eccles and Gootman

(2001) argue that this is due to the fact that organisations and institutions that are community based enable adolescents to experience what it means to belong and to be of importance to fellow members of said community. In addition to this, Baumann et al. (1997) argue that when adolescents feel connected to institutions in this way, they are less likely to become involved in misdemeanour or substance abuse. As such, it is argued to be that it is the opportunities for bonding and connecting with peers and developing a collective identity that keeps adolescents out of trouble and sets them “on a path towards life-long civic participation” (Flanagan, 2003, p. 2).

Therefore, it is argued to be that by participating in community based extracurricular organisations and institutions and fulfilling certain needs and obligations of those organisations, adolescents come to see themselves as valued members not just of that community, but of the public. Bowes et al. (2001) and Klandermans et al. (2002) argue that conceptions of positive peer solidarity in these organisations and institutions are linked to adolescents’ level of interest and engagement to humanitarian causes. In addition to this, Bowes et al. (2001) opine that as most often humanitarian projects and political goals are realised through a collective effort, experiences of peer solidarity are important for adolescents in order to foster interest and commitment. Hence, it is argued that adolescents are more likely interested in engaging in humanitarianism through a collective effort rather than on an individual level.

The following segment will further discuss adolescent engagement in relation to collective effort and engagement.

### 3.4 ADOLESCENT ENGAGEMENT

This final segment of the theoretical framework will entail different theories and concepts relating adolescent humanitarian engagement.

Some scholars, such as Commins et al. (2010) believe that the implementation of Social Media and Social Media platforms in humanitarianism can be a potential valid method of engaging adolescents in humanitarianism. They argue that the western adolescents of today spend a lot of valuable time online

and, thus, humanitarian organisations and campaigners should meet adolescents “where they are” and that in order to inspire adolescent engagement and interest in humanitarianism, should learn to exploit and capitalise on “the informed, networked, and collaborative learning styles” of contemporary adolescents (ibid, p. 13).

According to Beddington (2013) and Lindley (2013) studies show that adolescents use Social Media to connect with peers in order to share pictures and videos, to stay updated on friends’ lives and to gain advice and information. In other words, they argue that Social Media have become an essential and integrated part of adolescents’ lives, with most western teenagers having access to the internet and owning a smartphone. Beddington further argues that adolescents are increasingly defining themselves through online persona and social networks, and refers to this near continuous access to the internet as *hyper-connectivity*. He further argues that this development of *hyper-connectivity* is having a deep impact on how adolescents view themselves and how and where they “belong” in the world (Beddington, 2013; Lindley, 2013). In other words, one can argue that it is becoming clear that many adolescents derive a large portion of their social identity from their experiences through online social networks.

Regarding, adolescent humanitarian engagement, some scholars, such as Commins et al. (2010), Fisher et al. (2000), and Almerigi et al. (2005) argue that humanitarian engagement is especially beneficial for adolescents due to *Positive Youth Development (PYD)* which focuses on emotional growth. PYD theorists state that there are certain positive characteristics in adolescents characterised as the five C’s – i.e. competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Commins et al., 2010, p. 13; Fisher et al., 2000). According to Commins et al. PYD theory asserts that the five C’s are encouraged and developed by two specific experiential components – i.e. “participating in a community, and playing a role in improving the lives of its members” (p.13). Applying this to humanitarian participation, Commins et al. state that a humanitarian project aimed at generating such an experience could for example provide privileged adolescents from “an advantaged socioeconomic demographic the opportunity to connect with peers from

a disadvantaged population” (p. 13). In this regard, Almerigi et al, then argue that it is through this interaction between the advantaged and the disadvantaged, that the privileged adolescents learns of their less advantaged peers needs, struggles and hopes, and develop the five C’s.

*Relational Cultural Theory* (RCT) furthers the idea that developing relationships is elementary in the development of psychological health, and RCT scholars identify specific qualities that are essential in this development (Comstock et al, 2006: Comstock et al, 2008: Jordan et al., 1991). These certain qualities are referred to as *growth fostering* by Liang et al. (2002) and revolve around open communication, mutual engagement, and effective relationships, which together is referred to as *relational health*. Jordan et al. argue that if these qualities are not present in or being encouraged in relationships, adolescents will in turn not feel empowered or authentic in their relationships with others, which often results in adolescents experiencing depression and psychological distress.

Jordan (1991), Comstock (2005) and Comstock et al. (2006:2008) argue that the concept of relational health, which revolves around the abovementioned qualities, reflects four dimensions: First, *mutual engagement* – i.e. a sense of mutual involvement, commitment and agreement with each other. Second, *authenticity* – i.e. gaining knowledge of oneself and the other, and being able to be yourself and genuine with each other. Third, *empowerment* – i.e. feeling personal strength and being encouraged and inspired. And finally, *conflict tolerance* – i.e. being able to deal with conflicts, and accepting of differences of opinion and expression.

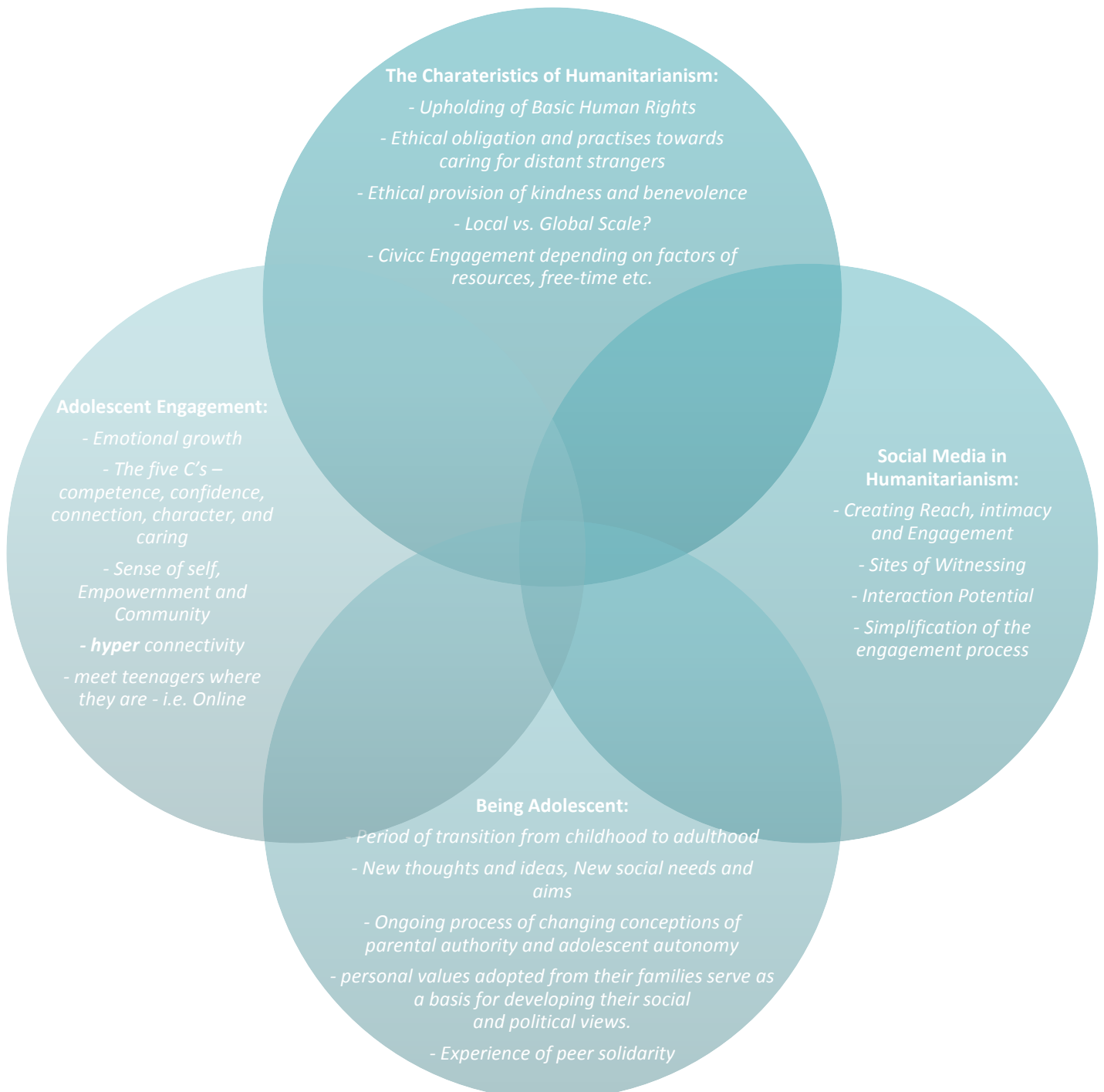
Commins et al. argue that web-enabled technologies and Social Media have presented new opportunities to extend PYD theory and RCT:

Given the ubiquity of Social Media, it is no longer necessary for advantaged youth to reach out only to disadvantaged communities within physical proximity; and communities in inaccessible areas of the

world (...) need not be excluded from connection with a potential source of encouragement and empowerment (p.14).

Thus, Commins et al. argue that although RCT and PYD traditionally applies to traditional humanitarian engagement, these principles also apply to online engagement due to the fact that adolescents of today are digitally native and gain much of their experience, social contact, community and information etc. online. In other words, utilising Social Media and online social networks can be argued to allow a global community, in which adolescents from otherwise disconnected and unrelated vicinities and environments are empowered and encouraged to connect with peers on a global scale. However, in regards to traditional methods of humanitarian engagement, RCT and PYD principles seem to suggest that humanitarian engagement should be a collective action by joining a physical community, whereas, online engagement seem to offer a more autonomous alternative of joining a community.

To finalise the theoretical framework, the same figure introduced at the beginning of the theoretical framework is presented again as a follow-up, representing key concepts of the four overarching segments regarding adolescents in connection with humanitarianism and the use of Social Media in humanitarianism. As such, the preceding framework has attempted to uncover different theories and concepts regarding humanitarian engagement in adolescence and online engagement. As mentioned in the introduction to the theoretical framework the four segments chosen, were applied due to their perceived relevance to answering the research question of this thesis. Hence, these concepts will be applied and discussed in the following chapter which presents the analysis of this thesis.



**Figure 3:** Recapitulation of important points in the theoretical framework.

## IV. ANALYSIS

The following chapter presents and discuss different perspectives, which were uncovered during the research of this master thesis, on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement. The analysis is divided into two overarching segments in concordance with the research question, thus, the first part *4.1 Humanitarian Engagement in Adolescence* will revolve around different perspectives on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism, and the second part *4.2 Online Engagement* will account for different understandings of online engagement.

### 4.1 HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

As established, this first part of the analysis will present different perspectives on why adolescents engage in humanitarianism. As such, this segment will revolve around different aspects and themes to adolescent engagement which were uncovered during the data collection, which will in turn be discussed by applying the relevant theories from the theoretical framework.

#### 4.1.1 WHAT IS HUMANITARIANISM TO ADOLESCENTS?

As was uncovered in the theoretical framework there are various different understandings and definitions of what humanitarianism is or should be considered to be. This is in turn reflected in the opinions and understandings of the adolescents who participated in this research. The adolescents presented various definitions and experiences of what humanitarianism is and different reasonings as to whether or not it is important to engage in. They defined it from being small acts of kindness as helping an old lady cross the road or talking to lonely homeless people to large scale acts of donating to or volunteering in Third World Countries. Although their experiences with humanitarianism differed greatly as well, what they all had in common in regards to how they understood humanitarianism was that no matter their definition, terms such as “giving” or “helping” were all continuously mentioned. One adolescent related it to financial aid of



some sort, whereas most of the others often related it to go beyond help of a financial or material nature, as such, they all seemed to understand humanitarianism as a form of aid to those less fortunate. As indicated above the adolescents understood this *aid* as various different charitable actions both on a small and large scale, as well as, on local, national and global scales. In relation to this, during the interviews a theme or trend seemed to appear in which some of the adolescents considered local and national centred aid – i.e. local and Danish causes – to be of a higher importance and relatability than aid on a global scale. Sixteen year old Emilie found it hard to define humanitarianism in terms of delimiting it as to her charitable actions could both be defined as financial and material support, but also as doing good deeds. She was, however, completely sure that engaging in humanitarianism is important:

**Interviewer:** *Could you elaborate on why you think that?*

**Interviewee:** *Well, I think it's important, and I feel that as fellow human beings we have an obligation to help one another.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay. Do you think that on a personal level, or on a national level as well – I mean do you feel that if Denmark has the opportunity to help in some way, we should?*

**Interviewee:** *Both. I mean because in Denmark we are incredibly well off compared to other countries, so I think that as a society we should help and probably a lot more than we already do. But I also think that I personally have an obligation to do so, because I know that I am privileged and so I should share what I can.*

Emilie, as well as, most of the other adolescents all seemed to understand or at least to some extent show awareness that they are privileged and in turn, they feel morally obligated to engage in humanitarianism on some level. Most of the participating adolescents agreed on the fact that humanitarian aid should be centred on those in need or those less fortunate than them, and that if one were able to help one should. Of course there were varying opinions on how this aid could be carried out most effectively and whether or not it should be to local or global causes, as well as, whether or not adolescent should engage in humanitarianism at all and in what ways. However, the fact that most of the adolescents believed that if

one were able one should help where one could, as fellow human beings have an obligation to care for and help one another, indicates that in accordance with Vissing (2012) to adolescents humanitarian aid revolves around acts of kindness, concern, empathy and is essentially a moral obligation to help fellow human beings. As mentioned most of the adolescents felt that engaging in humanitarianism could be anything from a small good deed to larger scale engagement such as volunteering, which is in accordance with Dawes (2007), Evans (2008) and Forsythe (2005) as they opine that humanitarianism acts can be anything from small scale to large scale. Bella from the UK who is also 16 stated similarly:

*I believe that any form of action taken that is used for the benefit of those in need can be considered as a valid level of humanitarian engagement, whether it be travelling to foreign countries to volunteer or simply signing an online petition to help others. Of course, one could argue that there is always 'more that you can do' - but in my opinion even the smallest change can make a difference.*

As such, this indicates that among most adolescents any act that is centred on those in need and benefits them, it can be classified as humanitarianism. In agreement with Barnett (2011) they also indicate that actions on both a local or global scale, and actions centred around local or national causes are equally valid, although opinions on the importance or relatability of these causes differ. Thus, contrarily to Boltanski (2001), Cohen (2001), Chouliaraki (2012), Dawes and Sheff (2012) and Vestergaard, (2009) the adolescents who participated in this research do not believe that humanitarian aid should necessarily be primarily about aiding *distant strangers* in Third World Countries, but *strangers* closer to home as well.

However, In this regard, it is essential to note that the adolescents had personal preferences not only in regards to local vs. global causes, but also the nature of the action taken. Several of the adolescents noted the importance of being able to see results of one's work in order for the action to feel successful, this indicates to some extent that some of the adolescents – although focused on helping those in need – feel that engaging in humanitarianism should result in some sort of personal reward as well – i.e. feeling good about helping others. Hence, some adolescents preferred to take a more active part in humanitarian

engagement compared to a more passive role. For some this was primarily a hypothetical discussion regarding future opportunities to somehow get involved in humanitarianism, whereas, for others who had already had an opportunity to be actively involved, felt this was more beneficial both personally, but also for the cause in question.

Most of the adolescents who were interviewed had been involved in humanitarianism or charity in some shape or form through different channels, both individually, together with family or through some type of institution. It was evident, however, that the level of engagement, as well as, interest differed greatly amongst the adolescents depending on many factors – especially factors such as free-time and amount of or lack of resources, that Norris (2001) notes greatly influence levels of interest and engagement.

On an individual level, several of the adolescents have joined collections or contributed to collections for different charity causes and organisations such as *Red Cross*. Some of the adolescents buy the Danish magazine *Hus Forbi* which is a magazine about homelessness in Denmark and sold by homeless and marginalised people in Denmark. Others buy from and contribute to local second hand shops. All of these individual methods of engaging in humanitarianism are to some extent characterised



Picture 4: An example of Hus Forbi

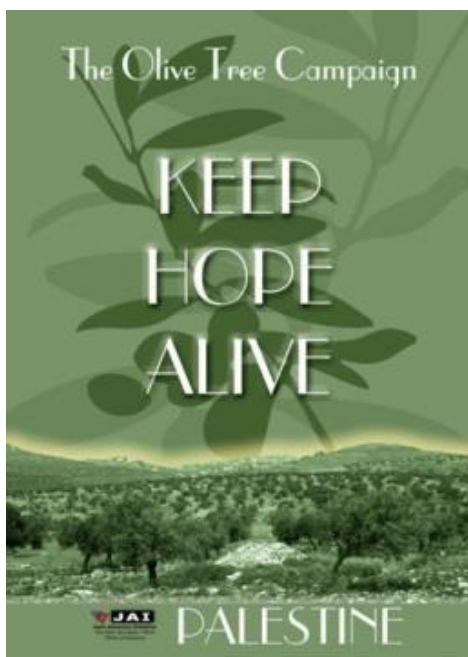
by actions on a small as well as local scale. On the other hand, some of the adolescents who were interviewed had also been involved in a collective effort in one way or another, most often through some type of institution – namely, school or some kind of recreational club. According to adolescents these collective efforts have been a mix of local and global causes, such as collecting money and clothes for unprivileged people in Third World Countries, or donating to local sports clubs. Several of the adolescents interviewed are involved in different scout clubs or children and youth organisations such as *FDF* or *KFUM(K)*. *FDF* and *KFUM(K)* are both Danish, Christian children and youth organisations in which boys and girls come together for different activities, events, summer camps, and volunteer work. These organisations

are to some extent very family oriented, and it became clear that the adolescents who were a member of these organisations had become so mostly due to their families being involved in some way as well.

*FDF* or *KFUM(K)* was just one the ways in which the adolescents had been involved in humanitarianism together with the family. Of course the level of interest and engagement varied among the parents as much as it did amongst the adolescents, however, most of the adolescents indicated that their parents most often contributed in some way or another. For example one family sponsors a child in Africa, and most adolescents watch different charity shows with their families – e.g. *Danmarks Indsamling*. According to the adolescents some parents were very interested and involved in humanitarianism, whereas, others mostly contributed when it was convenient – in the sense that an “easy” opportunity was presented, e.g. door-to-door collections – or if there was a reward involved – e.g. a chance of winning a prize for donating in a charity show. Some of the adolescents had been out collecting for different organisations together with their families, namely *The Danish Cancer Society*, which is Denmark’s largest combating illness organisation and funds approximately fifty percent of cancer research in Denmark (The Danish Cancer Society, 2013).

Furthermore, at *Dronninglund Efterskole*, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade has been divided up into three different

streams, Innovation, Exchange and Global. Some of the interviewees who were 10<sup>th</sup> graders had chosen the Global stream and, as such, had been involved in a global and large scale charity project called *Keep Hope Alive* which revolves around an olive-tree planting campaign in Palestine, in which olive trees are planted on Palestinian soil to prevent Israeli settlers to occupy the land. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders on this stream had been involved in this project the whole school year in different ways – namely, learning about the Israel/Palestine conflict, raising money for the project in several different ways, having Palestinians of the same age staying



Picture 5: Keep Hope Alive Poster

at the school, and finally going to Palestine to plant the olive trees together with Palestinians the same age as them and learning about their everyday life.

The experiences that the adolescents had with these institutions and the related charity projects, as well as the experiences with humanitarianism from a familial perspective will be further elaborated on throughout the analysis.

#### 4.1.2 Local vs. Global Causes

As established it became evident through the data collection of this thesis that a trend in which different aspects of local versus global causes appeared and as indicated one of these aspects revolved around a difference in experiences with humanitarianism. In other words, although most of the adolescents defined humanitarianism as aiding people less fortunate than them no matter where in the world, they clearly made a distinction between local, national and global causes and projects. Most of the adolescents had to some extent been engaged in both local and global projects, either by being involved directly in a project or donating money or clothes to it. As such, for the adolescents engaging in humanitarianism should benefit both close, but also distant *strangers*.

The term *distant strangers* which Boltanski (2001), Cohen (2001), Chouliaraki (2012), Dawes and Sheff (2012) and Vestergaard (2009) have put forth indicates a sort of impersonal relationship to both humanitarianism in general and to those in need whom one is aiding, which to some extent correlates with Vissing's notion that humanitarianism is an ethical or moral provision of benevolence – i.e. something that you engage in due to altruistic reasonings. Contrarily to this notion, it became evident that several of the adolescents who take an active part in engaging in humanitarianism do so for more personal reasons. One aspect in which this became evident was in the distinction between local and global causes, especially in relation to *The Danish Cancer Society*. One adolescent, Stine Gamborg relates that when the husband of one of their teachers, Hanne, at *Dronninglund Efterskole* passed away from leukaemia, they raised some money in one of the classes in his honour and presented the teacher with the diploma of donation. Fifteen

year old Kasper, who is not very interested in humanitarianism, tells that his parents take care of such things and that the main concern or cause that they contribute to is *the Danish Cancer Society*, as it is a cause close to his mother heart as Kasper's grandmother passed away from cancer. As such, it is evident that a connection exists between personal experience and levels of interest and engagement in humanitarian work. Several of the adolescents brought cancer up as a subject either as a common cause to donate to or because they had somehow been affected by cancer, which also shows that it is something that affects almost everyone. As such, even if one is not interested in humanitarian work one might involve oneself anyway because of personal reasonings – e.g. losing loved ones to cancer, or even worrying that one might get cancer later in life.

In relation to *The Danish Cancer Society* and the trend of local versus global, another adolescent, Jonas who is sixteen, tells that he mainly cares about local and national causes as he feels they might be of a higher importance and relatability. Jonas, who has lost two loved ones to cancer, feels that he can better relate to a cause such as fighting cancer in Denmark, because it is easier to relate to compared to people suffering from sickness in Third world countries:

**Interviewee:** *Of course there are a lot of people who think it is important [to engage in humanitarianism] and I guess I think that too, but I just have some unique opinions...*

**Interviewer:** *Well, do tell?*

**Interviewee:** *Well, it's not that I think that everyone should feel bad or be poor, but for example doing charity for people down in Africa, that's not something I feel strongly about... I would rather donate to something like *The Danish Cancer Society* because... well perhaps it is not fair to say that they are worth more, but I think there is more productivity and advantages to be had from saving people from cancer [Here in DK] than from the people we save from hunger and sickness down there [Africa].*

As such, in Jonas' opinion aiding national causes and helping those in need at home compared to abroad generate more value and benefits for society at home in the long run. As such, he further indicates that humanitarian work should not only be for altruistic reasons:

***Interviewee:** (...)Well not that engaging in humanitarianism should be about me getting something out of it, but you still have a hope that you will experience some joy in doing something for others.*

***Interviewer:** Sort of like a feeling of success?*

***Interviewee:** Yes, or that you at least feel that you have made a difference and not just put a band aid on the wound. Else it is just like throwing money in the ocean, so yeah being able to see that you make a difference. Because if you walk around in uncertainty, I just feel like it is a waste.*

Several of the interviewed adolescents mention something similar in their experiences, that although humanitarianism should benefit others, it is also important to be able to see some results of one's efforts. Jonas states that it would be a waste if one were not able to see the difference one made through ones work, which again indicates that adolescents, at least to some extent, tend to measure success in relation to engaging in humanitarianism – i.e. that one's humanitarian work only feels successful if one can see the results of the work, and in turn experience joy in helping others. To Jonas, this is also why feels that local and national causes are of a higher relatability. This is especially evident in the fact that he would rather talk to a homeless person to give this person companionship or give them clothes so that he can see they benefit from it, rather than donating money to a charity in a Third World Country. Later in the interview with Jonas, when discussing online engagement versus more traditional methods of engagement, Jonas mentions that he thinks there is a societal pressure to think it's important to engage in humanitarianism, which he thinks has a negative influence especially on adolescents, however, to him he doesn't feel that pressure in relation to online engagement as to him it is more of an anonymous act of participation. However, he is also of the opinion that the social pressure he refers to could be completely disposed of it, if

it became obligatory to donate money to humanitarian causes through a governments tax system. In other words, Jonas believes that we could do a lot more good if everybody had to contribute a small percentage of their wages all to a common cause, which is then decided on a governmental level.

Another dimension to the local versus global trend is something that the adolescents refer to as scepticism. Some of the adolescents indicate that this scepticism stems from their parents, and revolves around trust. Simply put, some of the adolescents point out that especially with global causes and projects that you watch on TV for example, it can be difficult to determine and trust who and what is legitimate or not, whereas it is argued to be “easier” to trust local or Danish projects. One such sceptic adolescent is seventeen year old Jesper Kalmar who relates that his parents would rather support the local society, and that they would rather trust a local association to handle their money, than sending them directly to a charity organisation. On this topic, Jesper relates:

***Interviewee:** Well my mom, she’s one of those people who have a tendency to not really believe like what you see on TV for example...*

***Interviewer:** So she’s a sceptic too?*

***Interviewee:** Yeah, I think she is a little bit and my dad too, he’s probably a bit of a sceptic too. It’s like, well they always say that we have to do whatever we can to help each other in this world and we can’t forget that, but it is also equally important to familiarise yourself with what you are giving money to... Often I think it is not so easy to recognise if it is a scam or legit, so they [my parents] have told us not to hold back on that, but still be open.*

In following the argument of Jesper’s parents, another perspective on the local versus global issues is presented. Commonly, the term “scepticism” evokes negative connotations of distrust. However, as Jesper explains it, scepticism does not necessarily have to result in distrust or a lack of interest in engaging oneself in humanitarianism. Contrarily, this indicates to some extent a view that it is important to gain knowledge



and familiarise oneself with the projects and causes one wishes to engage in, perhaps to be more efficient in one's engagement.

Therefore, scepticism in this regard is not necessarily argued to be a negative influence as such, yet it is evident that adolescents with sceptic parents are to some extent influenced to also become sceptic themselves. The following segment will discuss this aspect of influence, as well as the relationship between parental authority and adolescent autonomy in adolescence further.

#### 4.1.3 PARENTAL AND FAMILIAL INFLUENCES

Fifteen year old Gaia from Italy notes that she thinks it is of high importance that people become aware of what humanitarianism is and to some extent experience it, especially while growing up:

*I think being useful to other people in ways that don't necessarily give you any material advantages is important, especially while growing up, because it gives you the chance to widen your view of the world and the people around you who might be in need (even though you might never meet or see them).*

As such, Gaia opines that it is an important part of adolescence to widen one's horizons and to learn about the world and its people by aiding those less fortunate than themselves. This further indicates that humanitarianism is something one should be introduced to through one's upbringing – e.g. through one's family. As presented in the theoretical framework family dynamics and values are an ongoing process of changing conceptions of roles of authority and autonomy, which in turn is argued to influence the level of humanitarian interest and engagement in adolescence.

As established in the previous segment, seventeen year old Jesper has stated that he like his parents is a bit of a sceptic in relation to some aspects of humanitarianism. He further relates that even though he does not have a great interest in humanitarianism, he still feels he makes his own decisions regarding his interest and engagement in humanitarianism. Yet, he recognises that he is a sceptic like his parents. According to Eccles and Gootman (2001) and Flanagan (2003) this contrarily indicates that at least to some

extent his “scepticism” stems in the values he has derived from his upbringing – i.e. the personal values and opinions of his parents regarding humanitarianism are part of the development of Jesper’s personal views on humanitarianism. In his interview, Jesper further states that humanitarianism is still something that his parents “take care of”. As such, according to Smetana (1995) and Morris and Steinberg (2001) one can argue that the “scepticism” of his parents may influence his level of or lack of interest in humanitarianism. In other words, if adolescence is characterised by a process of changing parental authority and adolescent autonomy which may influence the adolescents’ decision making regarding humanitarianism, one can argue that the personal views and authority of the parents may influence the views of the adolescent, and in turn their level of interest in humanitarianism.

Sixteen year old Sofie Hansen, who is a Global student, presents another aspect of this concept:

***Interviewee:** Yes it is very much me [who makes her decisions]. That is, we are very independent in my family, and I mean for example it is me who makes the decision to buy Hus Forbi when I’m in Aalborg with my friends, even if they don’t. I think it’s something that has been given to me during my upbringing, and then I have chosen to keep it, if you can put it that way.*

***Interviewer:** So you feel that you have chosen on your own to take that interest further? Taken it to heart?*

***Interviewee:** Yes.*

Sofie relates that her humanitarian interest is something that has developed through her upbringing and has been influenced by her parents’ values and opinions; however, she feels that it is her own decision to take that interest further by for example choosing the Global stream, or bying *Hus Forbi*. Sofie also indicates that her autonomy regarding her humanitarian interest goes beyond the opinions of her friends, as well. In fact most of the students do not seem to consider peer pressure as a factor in the aspect of humanitarian engagement in adolescence; however, in order to have gained more perspective on this

particular topic and in turn discussed it further, the theoretical framework and interview guide should have covered this topic more comprehensively.

In contrast to Jesper, the roles are completely opposite in the home of seventeen year old Maibritt, where she is the one who influences her parents and not the other way around. Maibritt is one of the students on the Global stream and has been involved in the *Keep Hope Alive* project throughout the school year, among other things by going to Palestine to plant olive trees. Maibritt relates that she did not have much interest in humanitarian work before her experiences with the Global stream, although she has always believed it to be important to engage in, in some way, however, *Keep Hope Alive* has inspired her in several different ways. One of the ways in which the Global stream and her experiences have inspired her is to take a more active role in the family regarding humanitarianism. Before the Global stream she did “small” things such as buying *Hus Forbi*, but in her opinion her family does not have much of an interest in humanitarianism, which frustrates her to some extent:

*Interviewee: No, unfortunately, even though I sometimes wish they would, like “Why don’t they?” I mean why, why don’t they. I mean why do they not take more of an interest and show more initiative, and why don’t we familiarise ourselves with more issues and participate in more things... so it’s not something that we have really done in my family.*

As such, by experiencing a situation in which Maibritt took an active part in aiding people, she now feels that her family could do more, and she actively attempts to influence her parents more to also take an interest in humanitarian work. In spite of her family not having a high interest in humanitarianism, Maibritt feels that her upbringing has still influenced her wish to participate in the *Keep Hope Alive* project, as her parents has always taught her to not just think of herself, but of others as well, which correlates with Eccles and Gootman (2001) and Flanagan’s (2003) theories of parental values shaping the adolescents opinion and interest in humanitarianism. Furthermore, in relation to the changing relationship in family dynamics between parental authority and adolescent autonomy, Maibritt relates that it was entirely her decision to choose the Global stream, and that she had her parents’ full support in doing so:

*Interviewee: Well my mom is a little overprotective, so she was like "Oh but it's dangerous" and especially because of all the trouble down there last summer, and the heat and... I mean they were concerned, but at the same time they probably would have chosen it too if they had the chance because it was such a special opportunity, I mean in the end they didn't want me to miss it, if it was something I really wanted.*

As such, despite her parents' initial concern, what Maibritt relates, indicates that her parents trusted her and that she felt mature and autonomous enough in this decision to make it on her own. Several of the other Global students relate much the same situation with their parents – i.e. them being concerned, but ultimately letting the adolescent decide for him- or herself. Moreover, several of these students also relate that their parents continue to support them after their experiences in wanting to further their interest and engagement in humanitarianism. Contrarily, some of the students who had deselected the Global stream relate that they did so because their parents showed too much concern. One adolescent even relates that his parents would not allow him to go because they were too afraid, which in turn made him afraid. This, according to Smetana (1995) and Morris and Steinberg (2001) indicates that the adolescents allowed the fear or concern of their parents to influence their decision making regarding their level of interest and engagement in humanitarianism.

Hence, it is evident that the process of changing conceptions of parental authority and adolescent autonomy in adolescence regarding humanitarian engagement is a varied and diverse process that does not develop and evolve at the same pace in every familial dynamic and relationship. The process is clearly influenced by several different factors, such as, level of maturity in the adolescent and the feelings and values of the parents.

Hence, it is furthermore evident that parental influence and family dynamics does have an effect on humanitarian interest and engagement in adolescence. For some of the adolescents an interest in humanitarianism has been fostered during childhood due to their parents having an interest and being involved in humanitarianism in some way. For some of the adolescents this interest has evolved into them

taking an active role in humanitarian work, whereas, in other families it is still considered a “responsibility” that the parents take care of. As such, part of why adolescents engage in humanitarianism is centred on whether or not they have been encouraged through childhood to take an interest in humanitarianism and to what extent humanitarianism has been present in their lives.

#### 4.1.4 INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES

As established in previous segments, some of the adolescents who were interviewed for this thesis have been involved in humanitarianism through institutional channels, such as school, or recreational clubs and activities. Some of the adolescents have gained much experience with charity work through the *Keep Hope Alive* project of the Global stream at Dronninglund Efterskole or events and activities with FDF or KFUM(K). This following segment will further discuss the different experiences and facets of what the adolescents experienced with humanitarianism through these channels.

In both the exploratory research phase as well as the data collection, it quickly became evident that adolescents join in humanitarian projects for several different reasons. What several of the reasons had in common is summed up accurately by seventeen year old Maya from the US:

*I've done some charity work with school, and I think that is a really cool way to get involved, because you get to be with your friends and have fun with them, and at the same time help other people who really need it.*

The terms *friendship* and *fun*, were keywords in several of the adolescents reasonings behind why the engaged in humanitarianism. Furthermore, it became evident that projects in relation with school or extracurricular organisations tend to provide just that – friendship and fun. However, Maya also stresses that it should be to help others in need, which is something that most of the adolescents tend to agree on is the most important part of the experience, whereas, some of the adolescents admitted that the experience itself was the most important part for them personally. Others reasoned that they joined in humanitarian projects through school and other organisations to widen their horizons and learn about the

world. What the adolescents achieved and gained personally from these experiences were as varied as their reasonings for becoming involved.

As mentioned, friendship is indicated to be an essential part of why adolescents engage in humanitarianism. Hence, the fostering and developing of relationships and peer-solidarity as Bowes et al. (2001) argue is in fact an essential part of fostering humanitarian interest and engagement in adolescence. Bowes et al. (2001) further argues that as a result adolescents would rather engage in humanitarianism through a collective effort compared to effort on an individual level, however, among the interviewed adolescents there is no definite indication that they prefer a collective effort compared to an individual effort. Although a few of the adolescents clearly stated that they preferred to engage in humanitarianism through a collective effort – however, they did not necessarily link this to the experience of peer-solidarity, but more of a presumed notion that a collective effort would be more effective in the long run.

Eccles and Gootman (2001) argue that adolescents benefit from experiences and activities in community based institutions and organisations in the sense that they get to experience what it means to belong and to matter to other people, as well as, experiencing responsibility and obligations.

These argued benefits are especially recognised among the adolescents on the Global stream who participated in the Keep Hope Alive project. They all relate the project as a success, and effuse about the amazing experience it was – especially in regards to the trip to Palestine and meeting peers from a completely different culture and working together with them. One of these adolescents is sixteen year old Matilde Ejlertsen, who felt it was an extremely beneficial experience on several different levels to experience a situation like that up close and personal:

***Interviewer:*** *What do you feel you've gained personally from this experience?*

***Interviewee:*** *Well I mean the project is called Keep Hope Alive, and you really do experience or feel that hope because we are there 25 Danes together with the same amount of Palestinians, and we are all passionate about the same cause. So you really experience a sense of community coming together to help so you know that you're not in it all alone, and*

*that we all have a passion about helping and making the world a more just place. So it makes a lot of difference that you know that there are people fighting for the same thing as you, it just gives you this boost. You really want to help and do more once you get back from there, I mean the first couple of days after we got back to Denmark, I was just like... I was thinking I should do something, what can I do to help, because you just feel like “here I am in my own little perfect world”, and then you’ve seen how it is down there. So it gives you hope, and it gives you experience, and it gives you a desire to help.*

All of the Global students express similar emotions in relation to the weeklong trip to Palestine where they planted olive trees together with Palestinians the same age as them. However, the adolescents did not just work with the Palestinians; they spent a lot of time on the trip getting to know them personally and even stayed in their homes and met their



**Picture 6: Getting ready to plant Olive Trees in Palestine**

families. All of the Global students relate that it was a learning experience, and they all acknowledge gaining a certain level of personal and emotional growth in being so far from home and learning about a different culture in this way, and meeting people the same age as them with completely different worldviews. The concept of *perspective* was continually mentioned by the Global students as something they had gained from the experiences with the *Keep Hope Alive* project. It was a shock for the Danish adolescents to be confronted with the world of these young Palestinians compared to their “own little perfect world” back home in Denmark. Several of the Danish adolescents relate that it was astonishing to

experience how much joy the young Palestinians expressed despite their hardships and the oppression they deal with daily, which in turn, have made the Danish adolescents think more about how well of they are in Denmark and to some extent appreciate it more than they did before their experiences in Palestine.

In this regard, the five *C's of Positive Youth Development* – i.e. *competence, confidence, connection, character* and *caring* – will be discussed with the Global students in mind. PYD theorists Commins et al. (2010), Fisher et al. (2000), and Almerigi et al. (2005) argue that humanitarian engagement benefits adolescence due to furthering emotional growth as it enables the adolescents to evolve certain positive characteristics – i.e. the five *C's*. Hence, according to PYD theory the five *C's* are encouraged and developed in the Danish adolescents who engaged in the *Keep Hope Alive* project through participating in a community and playing a part in helping to improve the lives of the members of this community. Above, Matilde refers to experiencing a sense of community together with the Palestinians with the goal of coming together to help the Palestinians improve their daily lives. In relation to this, all of the Global students relate that they felt a *connection* being established with the adolescent Palestinians in the week they were there, which they intend to maintain now that they are home in Denmark by staying in contact with them. Furthermore, it is evident that all of the Danish adolescents have to some extent become more passionate about humanitarian work and as Matilde puts it *cares* about making the world “a more just place”. Moreover, in this sense, as these students all relate the gaining of perspective on the world as well as them being privileged, it is argued that the interaction between the advantaged and the disadvantaged have enabled further development of the Danish adolescents’ *character*. In this context, it is not only Matilde who experienced a “Boost” from working together with and helping the adolescent Palestinians. All of the Global students relate a similar feeling of *confidence* and gaining a certain level of *competence* during the trip, which is especially expressed in their desire to do more. Relating to this, Maibritt Lund, stresses the feeling of responsibility she now feels that she has as a “witness”, in the sense that she feels like she is one of the Palestinians now to some extent. With all of the experience and knowledge she has gained, Maibritt relates that she now has an obligation to attempt to pass it on and not let it go to waste.



Sofie expresses the same emotions that Matilde and Maibritt do, and she relates that she feel she benefitted greatly personally from the experience, especially in bonding with the girl that she stayed with during HomeStay in Palestine:

***Interviewee:** Yes, definitely, it's not just superficial things that I got out of that experience. I feel like I have a personal relationship with her. For example I wouldn't find it weird to visit her again, because I kind of have a connection with her now.*

Therefore, it is evident that the adolescents on the Global stream gained much both personally and emotionally through the experience of bonding and interacting with the less advantaged adolescent Palestinians. Thus, the concept of forming and fostering relationships is argued to be at the centre of personal growth and development in adolescence. This correlates with adolescents wishing to engage in humanitarianism to widen ones horizons and meet new people and experience new cultures. Several of the adolescents



**Picture 7: HomeStay with the Palestinians**

expressed this wish to widen their horizons, which for them was in part achieved through experiencing the daily lives of the underprivileged Palestinian adolescents, and in turn, gaining perspective on their own lives.

Hence, the confidence and competence, that the Danish adolescents feel they have gained through this experience and the interaction with the adolescent Palestinians is indicated to have resulted in a sense of empowerment in the individual adolescents, which according to *Relational Cultural Theory* (Comstock et

al, 2006: Comstock et al, 2008: Jordan et al., 1991) is at the centre of developing healthy relationships in adolescence.

The forming of healthy relationships and emotional growth does not only apply to the students on the Global stream, but also the adolescents who have grown up being a member of FDF or KFUM(K). RCT theorist such as Jordan (1991), Comstock et al. (2006:2008) and Liang et al. (2002) opine that the concept of relational health revolves around four concepts – i.e. *mutual engagement, authenticity, empowerment and conflict tolerance*. These four concepts are all expressed in what seventeen year old Anton Madsen and seventeen year old Nicolai Danneboe relates about being a member of FDF. Anton considers FDF a refuge, in which everybody can be themselves and where there is room for everyone to just be whom they are. Nicolai furthers the notion that FDF teaches tolerance and acceptance:

***Interviewee:** Well I really enjoy that there is room for everyone in FDF and that we can all be together, because you can clearly see that some of the members in our circle aren't the same as us, some who have special needs sometimes, and I think it's cool that we make it work anyway, and that everyone contributes with what they can, and that we can help each other and get the best out of the situation.*

***Interviewer:** So being accepting and tolerant with others and letting them in, that's something you have learned through FDF?*

***Interviewee:** Yes, it definitely is. I really think so, and I feel like for example in school when you talk about someone being a little weird, or the one who is not like the rest of us, then I can feel that I've been taught through FDF that there should be room for everyone and that everyone can contribute with something even though everyone are not capable of the same things or can contribute the same, but everyone can contribute something, and I have definitely learnt that through FDF.*

As such, Anton and Nicolai indicate that FDF fosters authenticity in the sense that adolescents in FDF are encouraged to be genuine with oneself and towards others. Furthermore, this also indicates that the

members of FDF are mutually engaged and committed to each other in making the group function and getting the best out of it, which to some extent furthers the notion that FDF also encourages tolerance towards differences in opinion and backgrounds.

What all of the adolescents who are members of FDF and KFUM(K) or part of the Global stream and have participated in charity projects have in common is a higher level of interest and engagement in humanitarianism compared to those adolescents who have not been involved in any form of charity through an institution or extracurricular organisation in the same way. Thus, it is argued that those affiliations and attached activities and projects do influence whether or not adolescents engage in humanitarianism. As such, adolescents who are somehow involved in such institutions and organisations do not only have a higher chance or possibility of being involved in charity work, but also have a higher propensity towards developing an interest in humanitarianism. In this regard, it is essential to note that religious affiliations and familial values play a part as well, as both FDF and KFUM(K) have Christian affiliations and are to some extent family oriented.

#### 4.1.5 PRIORITIES AND VULNERABILITY OF ADOLESCENCE

To some extent the previous segment accounted for the positive characteristics and benefits that adolescents gain from engaging in humanitarian work through institutional channels – i.e. positive youth development and relational health. However, in this regard these theories (in relation to adolescent humanitarian engagement) seem to suggest that it should be a priority for adolescents to engage themselves in humanitarianism. However, some of the interviewed adolescents pointed out that it should not necessarily be a priority in adolescence.

As mentioned at the start of the analysis several factors can affect levels of interest and engagement in humanitarianism. Norris (2001) suggests that factors such as free-time and amount of or lack of resources greatly influences levels of interest and engagement in charity work. Some of the adolescents do consider their age a hindrance of some sort in humanitarian engagement, especially in regards to free-time and lack

of resources. As such, these factors are argued to influence humanitarian interest in adolescence. However, it may not merely just be a lack of time and resources; it may also depend on how adolescents prioritise these things.

All of the adolescents who were interviewed agree that adolescence should at least be a time in which people should be introduced to humanitarianism in the sense that adolescents should learn that the world does not revolve around them. However, some of the adolescents, for example sixteen year old Kasper Momme opines that adolescence is not a time for engaging in humanitarianism as he feels like he does not have a lot of resources or money, and that he has “better” things to occupy his time – namely, spending time with friends and himself. Sixteen year old Josefine Hvarregaard would also rather focus on herself; however, school work is also an important prioritisation for her. As such, Josefine indicates that engaging in humanitarianism would take too much time away from school, which she thinks should be the most important focus in adolescence.

Seventeen year old Jonas presents another side to this aspect, when asked how he thinks taking an active role in humanitarian work – for example by going to Africa on a missionary trip – work would affect him:

*Interviewee: Yes, well I think I would feel better about that, because then you're in the middle of it and it is more close to you, so then I can see the people I help, and see that it actually makes a difference... But then again, I'd like to travel a lot and I have with my family, we've been in Asia, but as it stands now, I'm not sure I would want go to a country like Africa and help, because I actually think that it would be too hard for me because of all the misery... I simply don't think that I would be able to experience the same quality of life back home afterwards. I would feel incredibly guilty, because why do I have so much when they have so little? So in that sense, I guess, maybe I subconsciously try and keep it at a distance and just see them [those in need] as numbers and statistics and not as people, because then it is easier to handle.*

As such, Jonas indicates that adolescence should not necessarily be a time in which one should engage in humanitarianism due to emotional and psychological factors. As such, in contrast to the previously argued emotional and psychological benefits of engaging in humanitarianism, what Jonas relates above indicates that there is a possible backlash to engaging in humanitarianism in the period of adolescence, as adolescents may be too vulnerable to handle the harsh reality that such work might confront them with. However, in this scenario it is important to note that compared to for example the adolescents on the Global stream at school, Jonas has never himself experienced such a trip, and as such his opinion is merely hypothetical, and perhaps he would have a different experience in reality. He raises a valid point though, as adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, however, this transition is not a fixed or definitive process; hence people develop and evolve at different paces. As such, similarly to the process of changing conceptions of parental authority and adolescent autonomy – psychological development and concepts such as maturity and vulnerability also influence humanitarian interest and engagement in adolescence. Jonas relates another interesting facet to this aspect of adolescent engagement, as the one time he did engage on his own initiative in humanitarian work – i.e. raising money for the Danish Cancer Society – he felt it was a negative experience as he was rejected at several of the houses he dropped by, and said that he got the impression that people didn't trust him because he was an adolescent.

Thus, it has become evident that Western adolescents engage in humanitarianism for several different reasons, and that their level of interest and engagement in humanitarianism depends upon several different factors. Furthermore, there are different perspectives on the importance of engaging in humanitarianism in adolescence and whether or not adolescence is a time for different priorities. As such, even though a majority of the participating adolescents consider humanitarianism important – both in society and some personally as well, there is no definitive reason as to why or why not adolescents engage in humanitarianism.

Moreover, as alluded to earlier in the first part of the analysis, a distinction or trend was uncovered, which showed that level of interest in humanitarianism among adolescents is greatly influenced especially by institutional experiences. This connection was evident in the adolescents who had participated in humanitarian projects in FDF, KFUM(K) and the Global stream at Dronninglund Efterskole. Compared to the adolescents who had not experienced humanitarian projects through these or similar channels, they expressed and indicated a much higher level of interest in humanitarianism, not just at the present moment, but also in the future. Similarly, the adolescents in this study who have been influenced or encouraged through their upbringing to take an interest in humanitarian work also indicate a much higher level of interest in taking their humanitarian engagement further. This connection is illustrated in the following figure:



**Figure 4:** Illustration of the connection between familial influences or institutional experiences and level of humanitarian interest.

## 4.2 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

As established, the second part of the analysis will account for different aspects of how adolescents understand the use of Social Media in humanitarianism and online engagement. First, however, the Social Media habits of the interviewed adolescents will be discussed.

### 4.2.1 HYPER-CONNECTIVITY

Although the level and intensity of use of Social Media differed among the interviewed adolescents, every single one of them has a Social Media profile on at least one platform – namely, Facebook. A majority of the adolescents uses Social Media extensively throughout the day, and yet there are differences in both use and perceptions of this use.

It is only a few of the adolescents who do not consider Social Media an important part of their daily routine, whereas the majority definitely feel Social Media is a major part of their everyday life, and who acknowledges that Social Media has become an integrated part of adolescent culture.

In accordance with Beddington (2013) and Lindley (2013) the Social Media habits of the interviewed adolescents show that they primarily use Social Media to connect with their peers in several different ways and on different levels. What all of the adolescents have in common in this sense, is that they use Social Media – namely, Facebook – to stay updated on the lives of their friends – both near and far. Furthermore, they also use it as a connection to the rest of the world in the sense that a majority of the adolescents also use Social Media to stay updated on current events and issues of the world. As such, Facebook in particular does not only function as a networking site for these adolescents, but also a platform for information and influence, as Social Media channels are evidently often the channels through which the adolescents learn about what is happening in the world, both globally, as well as, in their own everyday life.

As established, a majority of the adolescents uses Social Media extensively throughout the day, as it has become an integrated part of their daily routine to “check in” as they refer to it. Sixteen year old, Josefine is one of the adolescents who use it extensively:

*Interviewer: Okay. What do Social Media mean to you?*

**Interviewee:** *I don't know... Well, it means a lot, that is I spend a lot of time on it. Everytime we have a break I have to check it and in the morning and in the evening, so I'm updated on what's happening.*

Seventeen year old Maibritt uses Social Media in much the same ways and considers it an important part of her daily routine just as Josefine and the majority of the interviewed adolescents do:

**Interviewer:** *Yes, okay. What do Social Media mean to you?*

**Interviewee:** *I would love to be able to say that I could just let it go, but I do not think that would be so easy. That is, it is a very important part of my everyday life , I mean I use it every day before I go to sleep, and then I check up on a lot of different things, and I write with my friends and my mom... I mean it is just a way to spend time I think.... Well you can't really help it.*

Maibritt further comments on how “normal” it has become for people her age to constantly be online. Interestingly enough, most of the adolescents who use Social Media extensively all recognise to some extent that they are in some way dependent on Social Media in order to have a functioning everyday life – some rather more subconsciously than others. One of the adolescents comments on how he only uses it because he can – i.e. its availability and accessibility is enough to draw him in, despite him not feeling dependant on it. The concept of connection lies at the centre of the dependency that most of the adolescents admit to, which is what Beddington (2013) refers to as *hyper-connectivity* – i.e. the need for near continuous access to the internet. Furthermore, as previously alluded to, most of these adolescents indicate that this type of behaviour or dependency on Social Media and the internet has become normal in their definition for adolescents. As such, it is evident that these adolescents derive a large part of their social life online, and believe that this is the way it is in general for adolescents both in Denmark and the rest of the world.



#### 4.2.2 SITES OF WITNESSING

A difference which quickly became evident in the research of this thesis between the Danish adolescents and the international adolescents is that it was only a few of the Danish adolescents who had actually actively participated in humanitarianism through online engagement, whereas a majority of the adolescents from the exploratory online research had in some way participated in humanitarianism through online channels. However, the method of data collection has to be taken into account in this regard, as the data from the exploratory research was collected through the Social Media platform of Tumblr by asking active adolescent Social Media users to share their opinion on humanitarianism and online engagement. Tumblr is an extremely active blogging networking site and according to Boutin (2009) is a popular platform for what is referred to as social justice bloggers. Therefore, one could argue that the users of Tumblr may have been more exposed to online humanitarianism and in turn have a higher propensity to engage in humanitarianism through online channels.

As established in the previous segment, a majority of the adolescents do not only use Social Media to connect and share with their peers, they also use it to stay updated on current events and what is happening in the world on a global level. For example, several of the Danish adolescents became aware of the devastating Earthquake in Nepal in June 2015 through Facebook, as well as how they could help. In this regard several of the adolescents from the exploratory online research similarly acknowledged that Social Media channels was most often the channels in which they discovered or would become aware of what is happening in the world, especially regarding humanitarian issues – i.e. natural disasters, political and social conflicts etc.



Picture 8: Facebook supporting Nepal survivors

Along with some of the Danish adolescents, seventeen year old Nelly from Mexico, further points out that through Social Media she often finds about causes

and issues that she never would have otherwise. This phenomenon is what Madianou (2013) and Boyd (2010) refer to as one of Social Media's main attractions – i.e. its high degree of disintermediation:

*One of the reasons I will forever think online activism is important is the way information is spread. For past activism & humanitarian causes, you'd march and rally and protest, but for your message to be heard, you'd have to rely on mainstream media. You essentially cut the middle man out, bringing causes that people would otherwise never hear about to the forefront of the conversation. Ex.- how the mass media has handled #BlackLivesMatter vs Social Media.*

Thus, in accordance with Madinou and Boyd, Nelly points out that the use of Social Media to spread awareness and information essentially has the potential to dispose with the traditional powerful intermediaries – e.g. media corporations and other gatekeepers. To a certain extent this also indicates that if news and information is shared directly by the original source, the information will be less “coloured” due to the lack of intermediary influence. Furthermore, a majority of both the Danish adolescents and the International adolescents all remark on the speed and audience reach that employing Social Media as an information and news channel allows.

In this regard, by disposing of the intermediary gatekeeper, Frosh and Pinchevski (2009), Boyd (2010) and Madianou (2013) argue that Social Media can be considered as *sites of witnessing*, in the sense that Social Media enables peer-to-peer communication and the involvement of the original source - e.g. the sufferers themselves. As such, this notion presupposes that one can be *heard* through Social Media channels. As already established, several of the Global students who participated in the *Keep Hope Alive* project now feels that they have an obligation to share their experience, because they have become *witnesses* to the situation in Palestine. Hence, they have been encouraged by the school to go out and share their stories both personally, but also at lectures at other schools. Most of the Global students, furthermore, shared their experiences online – i.e. pictures from their trip, and stories and links to the project on Facebook. Maibritt was one of those who shared her experiences:

**Interviewer:** *Okay, we talked a little about how you feel like a witness now, and that you have shared your experiences with this project on Facebook – Do you feel you can be heard through Facebook?*

**Interviewee:** *Well, in a way. Yes, I think you can, if you're able to do it well, because I think it can also be difficult to reach people through Facebook because you don't get close to it then. I mean you have to be good at expressing yourself and good at sharing, and sort of spell it out for people, exactly because so many people use Social Media, and you can easily just scroll past. So you have to see it through thoroughly if you use Social Media this way, but if it works, I think it works really well.*

Several of the other adolescents, both Danish and international, relate something similar in sharing humanitarian experiences online, whether they actually have done so or not. In their opinion Social Media is a useful platform to share and create awareness if you do it properly. One of the Danish adolescents actually pinpoints the central points of post-humanitarianism put forth by scholars such as Orgad (2013), Chouliaraki (2010:2012) Vestergaard (2008) and Mikami & Nolan (2012) and Richey, (2012) in this regard by emphasising that humanitarian “add” material should be visually attractive and less emotional.

Thus, the opinions of the adolescents both concur and oppose Boyd and Madianou's theory of Social Media platforms functioning as *sites of witnessing* to some extent. The adolescents tend to agree that if used correctly Social Media can be used to reach a large audience fast and extremely successfully, as it is hard to ignore or miss such things on Social Media, especially in reaching adolescents as this is where they spend a lot of their time. However, on the other hand, they also argue that it can be difficult to reach people completely in this way. In this context, Global student, Sofie relates that she would rather share her experiences in a face-to-face setting, as she would feel more reassured that her audience completely understood her and the severity of the cause at hand.

Another seventeen year old from France, who chose to be anonymous, argues that the future of humanitarianism is online:

*I feel like online humanitarianism is where the future is going/already there. With things like kick starters and fund me's, it's so easy to give. So yeah I believe it is a valid form of humanitarianism because you're still helping someone even though it might not be face-to-face with them. With it being online things are able to spread quicker and more people will be able to help/contribute.*

As such, there are different understanding and perspectives among the adolescents on how Social Media can be used in humanitarianism, however, a majority of the adolescents is argued to be of the opinion that Social Media platforms have a transformative role to play in future humanitarianism especially in reaching and engaging adolescents.

#### 4.2.3 PROS AND CONS OF ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

In researching how adolescents understand online humanitarian engagement – a trend was uncovered in which the adolescents distinguished between the pros and cons of online engagement compared to more traditional humanitarian methods.

One advantage of using Social Media in humanitarianism that all of the interviewed adolescents agreed upon, was using Social Media platforms as a networking tool in humanitarian projects. The Global students especially express positivity towards using Social Media this way, as they use Facebook to stay connected with the friends they made in Palestine. The *Keep Hope Alive* project has a networking group on Facebook, where the involved adolescents can contribute stories and pictures to keep each other updated – and not just on their lives, but on the ongoing olive tree planting campaign as well. In relation to this, a majority of the interviewed adolescents considers Social Media a benefit in this capacity. As established early on in the first part of the analysis, several of the adolescents indicated that although one should engage in humanitarianism with altruistic intentions, one should receive a form of personal reward – e.g. the joy of helping others, friendship, the experience itself etc. However, some adolescents only considered humanitarian work successful if they were able to experience or see the results of one's active effort.

Relating to this, the adolescents considered a Social Media platform beneficial in humanitarian work as it would enable them to keep updated on the projects they participated in.

Continuing with the concept of using Social Media as a networking tool in humanitarian work and projects, Commins et al. (2010) argue that web-enabled technologies and Social Media



Picture 9: The Global students stay connected through Social Media

have presented new opportunities to extend the principles of PYD and RCT. As such, Commins et al. (2010) argue that the emotional and physiological growth and health that adolescents develop through interacting with peers from a disadvantaged community does not necessarily depend upon physical proximity. However, a majority of the interviewed adolescents considered online engagement to be a more anonymous and individual way of engaging in humanitarianism. Furthermore, the same majority indicated a preference towards what they considered to be more traditional and active humanitarianism, in which you take a direct and active part in humanitarian work in order to really learn from the experience. Therefore, it is argued that the majority of the interviewed adolescents do not consider it an either or case, but understand online engagement as a supplementing or alternative humanitarian method which has several networking benefits. Therefore, it is argued that they agree with Karpf 's (2010), argument that acts of online participation merely represents an alternative online equivalent to traditional offline acts of participation, and that these online acts represent a *difference-of-degree* rather than a difference-in-kind.

Both the international adolescents and Danish adolescents all agreed on the fact that as an alternative method of engaging in humanitarianism, online engagement is especially valid for adolescents who are without resources or other possibilities of engagement. Eighteen year old Cedric from the US feels he is without physical networks to engage in:

*That's why I find online activism to be such a wonderful development. Instant, worldwide communication and easy access to information has opened up a whole new world for people who might otherwise be barred from participating in humanitarian work. People can share their thoughts, find communities of like-minded activists, organize events, put their name to petitions, donate money to people in need, and so much more. Internet activism is one of the few areas I don't feel excluded and inadequate; even if I can't join up with the Peace Corps and go build houses in developing countries, I can assert my presence, make my voice heard, and do my part to make the world a better place.*

Thus, Cedric indicates that online engagement provides adolescents a gateway into humanitarianism in which to become better informed and find networks to share and communicate one's interest while also contributing to a cause. Therefore, according to McQuail (2010), it is argued that for adolescents in particular who may be hindered by factors revolving around their age, online engagement holds a high level of *interaction potential* – i.e. providing a substitute to “real-life” and traditional humanitarian engagement.

Thus, there are different perspectives on the more positive understandings that adolescents have about online engagement. One thing that every single adolescent agreed upon was the potential of using Social Media platforms to reach, introduce and engage adolescents in humanitarianism, because as they put it, it has become such an integrated part of their culture, or as Commins et al. (2010) argue simply “where they are”.

On the other hand, some of the adolescents are also sceptic towards the use of Social Media platforms in humanitarianism, although, perhaps not to the same extent as Drumbi (2012), Siegel (2012), Waldorf (2012) and Gamson and Sifry (2013) who are critical of the emerging humanitarian trend of utilising Social Media, and refer to it as *Slacktivism* or *Clicktivism*.

However, some of the international students indicate that they are to some extent aware that there are critics of online engagement. Eighteen year old Kate from the UK is one of the few adolescents who commented on this in the exploratory research:

*I think there's an interesting question on whether so-called 'slacktivism' helps or hinders movements – I am not aware of any proper research about this – but In my opinion the kinds of people who would only change their icons or retweet one thing, probably wouldn't have done ANYTHING before Social Media, and even that little thing helps with visibility for a cause.*

As such, Kate indicates an opinion that is shared by a majority of the adolescents – that even the smallest effort counts, and that doing something on a small scale is better than doing nothing. Therefore, contrarily to Drumbl, Siegel and Waldorf, a majority of the adolescents do not consider online engagement as a simplification of humanitarian processes; however, as established they mostly consider and understand it as alternative methods of humanitarian engagement. Some of the adolescents do characterise online engagement as a more effortless or “easy” method of engagement, however, not in the same derogatory fashion. Furthermore, in this research, it is difficult to assess the long-term concerns and implications that some critics believe online engagement has, however, it is evident that to a majority of the adolescents humanitarianism is a not simply a black or white matter. As such, it is argued that their future interest and engagement in humanitarianism is dependent on several different factors, however, they do not all consider online engagement to have an overall negative influence on their level of engagement. Actually a majority of the adolescents consider it quite the opposite.

However, as alluded to previously, a majority of the adolescents consider Social Media platforms a good implementation in humanitarian work on the condition that it is used well or properly. In this context, several of the interviewed adolescents suggested that on some Social Media platforms – namely, Facebook – there is a lot of “noise” or “drivel” present. In other words, some of the adolescents like Shulman (2009)

argue that for online engagement to be beneficial in influencing humanitarian causes the acts of participation has to be substantial and concise. However, in contrast to Shulman (2009) the adolescents do not indicate any opinions on this having a negative long-term implication for adolescent engagement as this “drivel” is apparently easy to ignore, and they all feel capable in recognising substantial effort and participation.

Furthermore, as already discussed a majority of the adolescents understand online engagement as an alternative method of engaging in humanitarianism which is especially beneficial in reaching adolescents and creating awareness about humanitarian issues for them as they spend so much time online. However, it has been made further clear that adolescents engage in humanitarianism for several different reasons and that their interest and level of engagement in humanitarianism is dependent upon several different factors – e.g. familial or institutional influence, presented possibilities, lack of resources or interest and personal opinions.



## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this master thesis sought out to uncover *why Western adolescents engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement*. Hence, this research has attempted to construct knowledge on humanitarian engagement in adolescence and present different perspectives on why they engage in humanitarianism and how they understand online engagement.

It has become evident throughout this research that adolescents engage in humanitarianism in a multitude of different ways, both individually and collectively, and that their level of interest and engagement in humanitarianism is dependent upon several different factors. Furthermore, there was various perspectives on what humanitarianism entailed, as well as, differing opinions on global versus local efforts.

Some adolescents feel restricted or hindered by implications of their age – i.e. lack of resources, possibilities for engagement, vulnerability and autonomy - Whereas, others have simply not developed an interest in engaging in humanitarianism. One trend that emerged was the fact that level of interest in humanitarianism is greatly influenced especially by institutional experiences. This was evident in the adolescents from the Global stream at Dronninglund Efterskole, in which the majority chose the stream to broaden and widen their horizons, but gained much more personally and emotionally than expected, as well as, developing a greater interest in humanitarian work. Similarly, the adolescents' upbringing as well as family dynamics also influences their level of interest and engagement, as some of the adolescents who had been encouraged throughout childhood to have an interest in humanitarianism, most often chose to further that interest. In contrast, the adolescents who had not been influenced either by institutional experiences or their family did not have an interest in humanitarianism to the same extent.

Furthermore, there are different perspectives on the importance of engaging in humanitarianism in adolescence and whether or not adolescence is a time for different priorities. As such, even though a majority of the participating adolescents consider humanitarianism important – both in society and some

personally as well, there is no definitive reason as to why or why not adolescents engage in humanitarianism.

Similarly there is no definitive understanding of online engagement among the adolescents; however, there was an agreement among the majority of adolescents in this research that online engagement is considered an alternative or supplementing method of engaging in humanitarianism, which is especially beneficial in reaching an adolescent audience and creating awareness about humanitarian issues as the use of Social Media platforms have become such an integrated part of adolescent culture. Furthermore, some adolescents understand online engagement as a beneficial way to become introduced to humanitarian issues and a beneficial substitute for adolescents who feel hindered by circumstances of their age. However, another trend or common opinion surfaced among the adolescents in this research, which entailed certain scepticism towards the use of Social Media platforms in humanitarianism – for online engagement to be beneficial in influencing humanitarian causes the acts of participation has to be substantial and concise, which may be hindered on Social Media platforms such as Facebook.

This thesis is exploratory in nature and attempted to contribute knowledge about humanitarian engagement in adolescence with a focus on the emerging trend of online engagement. As such, different aspects of this topic were covered throughout the thesis. However, the concepts and aspects covered in this research is in no way definite, and, thus, more research could be done in order to construct more diverse and deeper knowledge about humanitarian engagement in adolescence.

As alluded to throughout the master thesis, different methods could have been taken into use in order to uncover different aspects to the topic, and in turn, uncovering other aspects to the research topic. For example, the group of interviewees could have been more diverse in the sense that adolescents from different schools and different stages of adolescence could have been interviewed. However, a deeper understanding about cultural differences in adolescent humanitarian engagement could for example be achieved by interviewing a more culturally diverse backdrop of adolescents, and could be useful to draw a better or more diverse picture of humanitarian engagement in adolescence.

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## VII. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

THEMES	QUESTIONS	THEORIES AND CONCEPTS BEHIND THE THEMES
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce myself</li> <li>- Explain the topic and objective of the Thesis</li> <li>- Explain that the interview is recorded</li> <li>- Explain that they can be anonymous if so desired</li> </ul>	
General Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name</li> <li>- Age</li> <li>- Grade</li> </ul>	
Humanitarianism (Charity) in general	<p>What is your understanding of charity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Examples?)</li> </ul> <p>Is it important for you personally to participate in charity in some way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why/Why not?</li> <li>- Local vs, global?</li> </ul> <p>Have you ever participated in charity through a school, or any extra-curricular activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (if yes) In what ways?</li> <li>- (if yes) What did you gain personally from that experience?</li> <li>- (if no) No opportunity? Or no interest?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upholding of Basic Human Rights,</li> <li>- Ethical obligation and practises towards caring for distant strangers</li> <li>- Ethical provision of kindness and benevolence</li> <li>- Local vs. Global</li> <li>- Emotional growth</li> <li>- The five C's – competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring</li> <li>- Sense of self, Empowerment and Community</li> </ul>
Charity & Adolescence	<p>Have you ever been involved in charity together with your family?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (if yes) In what ways?</li> <li>- (If yes) Were your parents in charge of that involvement?</li> <li>- (if no) No opportunity? Or no interest?</li> </ul> <p>Do you know if your parents are involved or anyway interested in charity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why/Why not?</li> <li>- (if yes) In what ways?</li> </ul> <p>Are you a member of a charity organisation, or do you in any other way engage in humanitarianism on your own?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (if yes) In what ways?</li> <li>- (if no) No opportunity? Or no interest?</li> <li>- What about in the future? Is it something you want to develop?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal values adopted from their families serve as a basis for developing their social and political views.</li> <li>- Civic Engagement depending on factors of resources, free-time etc.</li> </ul>

<p>Social Media</p>	<p>Do you feel like you have your own opinions regarding charity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are you able to decide with involving your parents?</li> <li>- Do you feel you need your parents' acceptance or permission to engage in charity?</li> </ul> <p>How much do you do in Social Media?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where do you have profiles?</li> <li>- How often do you use them?</li> </ul> <p>What do Social Media mean to you personally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- News channel?</li> <li>- Socialising?</li> <li>- Bracketing the day?</li> <li>- Passing time?</li> </ul> <p>How important is Social Media to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing process of changing conceptions of parental authority and adolescent autonomy</li> <li>- hyper connectivity</li> </ul>
<p>Social Media &amp; Charity</p>	<p>Have you used Social Media in relation to charity in any way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (if yes) In what ways?</li> </ul> <p>Do you feel or experience that Social Media is often what makes you aware about what is happening in the world?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- News?</li> <li>- Politics?</li> <li>- Crisis situations?</li> <li>- Charity events?</li> </ul> <p>Do you feel or experience that you're are able to share your opinions and be heard through Social Media?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why/why not?</li> </ul> <p>Could you imagine ways in which Social Media is beneficial in charity work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating Reach, intimacy and Engagement</li> <li>- Sites of Witnessing</li> <li>- Interaction Potential</li> <li>- Simplification of the engagement process</li> <li>- meet teenagers where they are - i.e. Online</li> </ul>
<p>End</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is there something that you would like to add?</li> <li>- Or elaborate on?</li> <li>- Thank you for participating</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX II: TRANSLATED QUOTES

### **Emilie Vestergaard, 16 years old:**

(Om det er vigtigt at engagere sig i humanitarisme)

**Interviewer:** Vil du yddybe hvorfor du synes det?

**Elev:** Altså jeg synes det er vigtigt, og jeg synes at som medmennesker så har vi pligt til at hjælpe hinanden.

**Interviewer:** Okay, er det så personligt for dig at du synes sådan, eller er det også som land – altså at hvis DK har mulighed for at hjælpe så skal vi også det?

**Elev:** Begge dele. Fordi altså i DK er vi jo i forhold til andre lande utroligt velstillede så jeg synes at vi som samfund bør hjælpe og måske også mere end vi allerede gør, men jeg synes også selv at jeg har pligt til det fordi jeg ved at jeg er privilegeret og så skal jeg også dele ud af det jeg kan.

*Translation:*

(On humanitarianism being important to engage in)

**Interviewer:** Could you elaborate on why you think that?

**Interviewee:** Well, I think it's important, and I feel that as fellow human beings we have an obligation to help one another.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Do you think that on a personal level, or on a national level as well – I mean do you feel that if Denmark has the opportunity to help in some way, we should?

**Interviewee:** Both. I mean because in Denmark we are incredibly well off compared to other countries, so I think that as a society we should help and probably a lot more than we already do. But I also think that I personally have an obligation to do so because I know that I am privileged and so I should share what I can.

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### **Jonas Søvik, 15 years old:**

(Om det er vigtigt at engagere sig i humanitarisme)

**Elev:** Jamen, der er jo selvfølgelig mange der synes det er vigtigt, og det synes jeg jo også på en måde, men jeg har nogle lidt særlige holdninger...

**Interviewer:** Jamen kom med dem?

**Elev:** Altså det er jo ikke fordi jeg synes alle mennesker skal have det dårligt, men sådan noget velgørenhed for fx folk nede i Afrika det er ikke noget jeg selv går super meget ind for... også fordi at så vil jeg hellere donere til sådan noget som kræft fordi at det ligesom.. altså det er måske ikke fair at sige at de er mere værd end os men det der med at der er mere produktivitet og gavn vi kan få ud af dem som vi redder fra kræft end dem fra sult og sygdomme dernede.

Translation:

(On humanitarianism being important to engage in)

**Interviewee:** Of course there are a lot of people who think it is important [to engage in humanitarianism] and I guess I think that too, but I just have some unique opinions...

**Interviewer:** Well, do tell?

**Interviewee:** Well, it's not that I think that everyone should feel bad or be poor, but for example doing charity for people down in Africa, that's not something I feel strongly about... I would rather donate to something like *The Danish Cancer Society* because... well perhaps it is not fair to say that they are worth more, but I think there is more productivity and advantages to be had from saving people from cancer [Here in DK] than from the people we save from hunger and sickness down there [Africa].

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**Elev:** (...)Altså ikke fordi at velgørenhed handler om at jeg skal få noget ud af det, så har man jo stadig håbet om at man vil få en eller anden glæde ud af at man har gjort noget for andre.

**Interviewer:** Altså at man får lidt en succes fornemmelse?

**Elev:** Ja, eller at man i hvert fald føler at det gør en forskel og ikke bare et plaster på såret. For ellers smider man jo bare penge i et hav, så det at man kan se at det gør en forskel. Ja, for hvis man går i uvished så føler jeg bare lidt at det er spildt

Translation:

**Interviewee:** (...)Well not that engaging in humanitarianism should be about me getting something out of it, but you still have a hope that you will experience some joy in doing something for others.

**Interviewer:** Sort of like a feeling of success?

**Interviewee:** Yes, or that you at least feel that you have made a difference and not just put a band aid on the wound. Else it is just like throwing money in the ocean, so yeah being able to see that you make a difference. Because if you walk around in uncertainty, I just feel like it is a waste.

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(Hvordan han tror at tage en aktiv rolle i humanitarisme ville påvirke ham? Fx. en missionærtur til Afrika?)

**Elev:** Ja altså det tror jeg at jeg vil have det meget bedre med, fordi så er man med i det, og det er nærliggende og jeg kan se dem og jeg kan møde de mennesker jeg hjælper, og se at det faktisk gør en forskel. Så igen... Jeg vil gerne ud at rejse meget, og jeg har også været ude i Asien med min familie, og sådan som det står nu så er jeg ikke sikker på at jeg har lyst til at tage til Afrika fordi jeg tror faktisk at det ville være for hårdt for mig. At der er for meget elendighed... Jeg tror simpelthen ikke at jeg ville kunne finde den samme livskvalitet herhjemme igen efter, jeg ville føle mig skyldig altså det der med hvorfor skal vi have så meget når de har så lidt. Så derfor prøver jeg måske også ubevidst at holde lidt afstand til det og bare holde dem som statistikker og tal og ikke som mennesker. Fordi så er det nemmere at håndtere.

*Translation:*

(How he thinks actively taking a part in humanitarian work – e.g. a missionary trip to Africa – would affect him?)

**Interviewee:** Yes, well I think I would feel better about that, because then you're in the middle of it and it is more close to you, so then I can see the people I help, and see that it actually makes a difference... But then again, I'd like to travel a lot and I have with my family, we've been in Asia, but as it stands now, I'm not sure I would want go to a country like Africa and help, because I actually think that it would be too hard for me because of all the misery... I simply don't think that I would be able to experience the same quality of life back home afterwards. I would feel incredibly guilty, because why do I have so much when they have so little? So in that sense, I guess, maybe I subconsciously try and keep it at a distance and just see them [those in need] as numbers and statistics and not as people, because then it is easier to handle.

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**Jesper Kalmar, 17 years old:**

**Elev:** Altså min mor, hun er en af dem der, der har tendens til at være meget sådan ikke rigtig at tro på det man fx ser i fjernsynet.

**Interviewer:** Okay, så hun er måske også en af skeptikerne?



**Elev:** Ja, det er hun lidt, men og min far... Han er nok også lidt skeptiker. Det er sådan lidt, altså de siger at vi skal gøre hvad vi kan for at hjælpe hinanden her i verden og det må vi aldrig glemme men det er også lige vigtigt at sætte sig ind i hvad det nu lige er at man giver penge til... Tit er det jo ikke nemt at gennemskue om det bare er noget fup eller om det ikke er, men de synes at, de har i hvert fald sagt til os at der må vi ikke holde os tilbage med at være åbne.

*Translation:*

**Interviewee:** Well my mom, she's one of those people who have a tendency to not really believe like what you see on TV for example...

**Interviewer:** So she's a sceptic too?

Interviewee: Yeah, I think she is a little bit and my dad too, he's probably a bit of a sceptic too. It's like, well they always say that we have to do whatever we can to help each other in this world and we can't forget that, but it is also equally important to familiarise yourself with what you are giving money to... Often I think it is not so easy to recognise if it is a scam or legit, so they [my parents] have told us not to hold back on that, but still be open.

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**Maibritt Lund, 17 years old:**

(Om hendes forældre engagerer sig eller interreserer sig i humanitarisme)

**Elev:** Nej desværre, selvom om man godt kunne ønske at, og godt kunne tænke mig at "Hvorfor gør vi ikke det?" altså hvorfor, hvorfor gør man ikke det. Altså hvorfor tager man ikke mere initiativ, og hvorfor sætter man sig ikke ind i flere ting, og deltager i flere ting, så er det ikke noget vi har haft gjort.

*Translation:*

(On whether her parents engage or have an interest in humanitarianism)

**Interviewee:** No, unfortunately, even though I sometimes wish they would, like "Why don't they?" I mean why, why don't they. I mean why do they not take more of an interest and show more initiative, and why don't we familiarise ourselves with more issues and participate in more things... so it's not something that we have really done in my family.

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(Om det var helt hendes egen beslutning at vælge Global linien)

**Elev:** Altså min mor er lidt overbeskyttende, så hun var sådan lidt "Åh det er jo farligt" og især pga i sommers det var meget varmt dernede og sådan... Altså de var jo klart bekymrede, men de var også sådan meget at de ville nok også selv have valgt det hvis de fik chancen, fordi det er så speciel en mulighed, altså de ville ikke have at jeg skulle misse den hvis det var det jeg godt ville.

*Translation:*

**Interviewee:** Well my mom is a little overprotective, so she was like "Oh but it's dangerous" and especially because of all the trouble down there last summer, and the heat and... I mean they were concerned, but at the same time they probably would have chosen it too if they had the chance because it was such a special opportunity, I mean in the end they didn't want me to miss it, if it was something I really wanted.

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**Interviewer:** Ja okay, hvad betyder sociale medier ellers for dig?

**Elev:** Jeg ville gerne kunne sige at jeg bare kunne slippe dem hvis det var, men det er jo ikke så let tror jeg. Altså det er en meget vigtig del af min hverdag, altså jeg bruger det jo hver dag inden jeg lægger mig til at sove, og så kigger jeg lige diverse ting igennem, og jeg skriver med mine veninder derhjemme, min mor snapper jeg med, altså det er jo bare tidsfordriv tror jeg også... Altså man kan ikke lade være.

*Translation:*

**Interviewer:** Yes, okay. What do Social Media mean to you?

**Interviewee:** I would love to be able to say that I could just let it go, but I do not think that would be so easy. That is, it is a very important part of my everyday life, I mean I use it every day before I go to sleep, and then I check up on a lot of different things, and I write with my friends and my mom... I mean it is just a way to spend time I think.... Well you can't really help it.

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**Interviewer:** Okay, nu snakkede vi jo lidt om at du føler dig som et vidne, og at du har delt dine oplevelser med det projekt på Facebook – føler du så ligesom at du kan blive hørt på facebook?

**Elev:** Altså på en måde, jo det tror jeg at man kan hvis man er god til at bruge det, for det kan også godt være svært at trænge igennem på facebook eller hvad man nu skal sige fordi man ikke kommer tæt på. Altså man skal være god til sådan at formulere sig, altså være god til at dele det og sådan skære det ud i pap, netop fordi der er så mange der bruger det og man kan bare sådan hurtigt scrolle forbi. Så det skal

gennemføres ordentligt hvis det skal være igennem sociale medier... Men hvis det så virker, så tror jeg også at det virker godt.

Translation:

**Interviewer:** Okay, we talked a little about how you feel like a witness now, and that you have shared your experiences with this project on Facebook – Do you feel you can be heard through Facebook?

**Interviewee:** Well, in a way. Yes, I think you can, if you're able to do it well, because I think it can also be difficult to reach people through Facebook because you don't get close to it then. I mean you have to be good at expressing yourself and good at sharing, and sort of spell it out for people, exactly because so many people use Social Media, and you can easily just scroll past. So you have to see it through thoroughly if you use Social Media this way, but if it works, I think it works really well.

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**Sofie Hansen, 16 years old:**

(Om hun tager sine egne beslutninger i forhold til hendes interesse i humanitarisme)

**Elev:** Det er rigtig meget mig selv... Altså der er vi sådan meget selvstændige i min familie og det er også mig selv sådan hvis jeg nu er i aalborg med mine veninder og jeg ser nogen gå med "Hus Forbi", så går jeg også selv hen og køber dem, også selv om de andre ikke gør, så jeg tror bare at det er noget der er kommet ind i opdragelsen, og så har jeg valgt at det gerne må blive der, hvis man kan sige det sådan.

**Interviewer:** Så du føler at du selv har valgt at føre det engagement videre? Altså at tage det til dig?

**Elev:** Ja.

Translation:

(On whether or not she makes her own decisions regarding her humanitarian interest)

**Interviewee:** Yes it is very much me [who makes her decisions]. That is, we are very independent in my family, and I mean for example it is me who makes the decision to buy *Hus Forbi* when I'm in Aalborg with my friends, even if they don't. I think it's something that has been given to me during my upbringing, and then I have chosen to keep it, if you can put it that way.

**Interviewer:** So you feel that you have chosen on your own to take that interest further? Taken it to heart?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

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(Om hun har fået noget mere personligt ud af turen)

**Elev:** Ja, helt klart det er ikke bare sådan overfladisk jeg har fået ud af det, jeg synes jeg har et eller andet personligt forhold til hende fx, jeg synes ikke at det ville være underligt fx at besøge hende igen. For nu har jeg en connection med hende kan man sige.

*Translation:*

(On whether she gained something more personal from the trip)

**Interviewee:** Yes, definitely, it's not just superficial things that I got out of that experience. I feel like I have a personal relationship with her. For example I wouldn't find it weird to visit her again, because I kind of have a connection with her now.

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**Matilde Ejlersen, 16 years old:**

(Omkring turen til Palestina og de jævaldrende hun mødte)

**Interviewer:** Hvad synes du det har givet dig personligt?

**Elev:** Jamen nu hedder det jo Keep Hope Alive, og man mærker det der håb fordi at vi står jamen altså 25 danskere og tilsvarende pælestinænsere og vi brænder ligesom for den samme sag, så man mærker ligesom det der fællesskab der er for at hjælpe så man ved at man ikke er ene og alene om det, at vi alle sammen har en eller anden passion for at hjælpe og at verden skal gøres til et retfærdigt sted, så det betyder meget at man ved at der er nogen der kæmper for samme sag som en selv og så giver det bare et eller andet boost. Man har lyst til at hjælpe, når man kommer hjem dernede fra, også bare sådan de første par dage efter at vi sådan var kommet til Danmark igen, man gik rundt derhjemme og tænkte jamen jeg burde lave et eller andet, jeg burde gøre noget, altså hvad kan jeg gøre, fordi man føler sig bare sådan, okay jeg går bare her i min helt egen lille perfekte verden ikke også, og så har man bare været nede og se hvordan det foregår, altså det giver et håb og det giver noget erfaring og det giver noget lyst til at hjælpe.

*Translation:*

(On the trip to Palestine and the peers she met)

**Interviewer:** What do you feel you've gained personally from this experience?

**Interviewee:** Well I mean the project is called Keep Hope Alive, and you really do experience or feel that **hope** because we are there 25 Danes together with the same amount of Palestinians, and we are all passionate about the same cause. So you really experience a sense of community coming together to help so you know that you're not in it all alone, and that we all have a passion about helping and making the world a more just place. So it makes a lot of difference that you know that there are people fighting for the same thing as you, it just gives you this boost. You really want to help and do more once you get back from there, I mean the first couple of days after we got back to Denmark, I was just like... I was thinking I should do something, what can I do to help, because you just feel like "here I am in my own little perfect world", and then you've seen how it is down there. So it gives you hope, and it gives you experience, and it gives you a desire to help.

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**Nicolai Danneboe, 17 years old:**

(Hvad synes du at du får ud af at være i FDF?)

**Elev:** Jamen jeg synes det er fedt at vi kan være sammen alle sammen i fdf for at man kan tydeligt se at vi har med i kredsen som ikke har det på samme måde som os, som har nogle lidt specielle behov nogen gange, og jeg synes det er fedt at vi får det til at fungere, og at alle kan bidrage med det de kan og at vi kan hjælpe hinanden så vi får det bedste ud af situationen.

**Interviewer:** Så sådan nogle ting som at være accepterende over for andre og bringe dem ind, er det noget der er blevet opfostret i dig igennem fdf?

**Elev:** Ja det er det helt klart, det synes jeg virkelig og jeg synes jeg kan mærke det på fdf og nogengange hvis man snakker om det i skolen, med at nogen kan godt være lidt mærkelige eller ham der er ikke helt ligesom os andre, så kan jeg godt mærke at igennem fdf der er vi blevet opdraget til at alle har en plads og alle kan bidrage med noget, men ikke alle kan det samme eller bidrage med lige meget, men alle kan bidrage med noget og det har jeg helt hundrede igennem fdf.

*Translation:*

(On what he feels he has gained through being a member of FDF)

**Interviewee:** Well I really enjoy that there is room for everyone in FDF and that we can all be together, because you can clearly see that some of the members in our circle aren't the same as us, some who have special needs sometimes, and I think it's cool that we make it work anyway, and that everyone contributes with what they can, and that we can help each other and get the best out of the situation.

**Interviewer:** So being accepting and tolerant with others and letting them in, that's something you have learned through FDF?

**Interviewee:** Yes, it definitely is. I really think so, and I feel like for example in school when you talk about someone being a little weird, or the one who is not like the rest of us, then I can feel that I've been taught through FDF that there should be room for everyone and that everyone can contribute with something even though everyone are not capable of the same things or can contribute the same, but everyone can contribute something, and I have definitely learnt that through FDF.

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**Josefine Hvarregaard, 16 years old:**

**Interviewer:** Okay. Hvad betyder de sociale medier så for dig?

**Elev:** Det ved jeg ikke... Jamen, altså de betyder da meget, altså jeg bruger jo meget tid på det.. Hver gang vi har en pause så skal jeg lige tjekke det og om morgenen og aftenen så man lige er opdateret på hvad der sker rundt omkring.

Translation:

**Interviewer:** Okay. What do Social Media mean to you?

**Interviewee:** I don't know... Well, it means a lot, that is I spend a lot of time on it. Everytime we have a break I have to check it and in the morning and in the evening, so I'm updated on what's happening.

### APPENDIX III: QUOTES FROM ONLINE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

**Bella, 16 years old, UK:**

I believe that any form of action taken that is used for the benefit of those in need can be considered as a valid level of humanitarian engagement, whether it be travelling to foreign countries to volunteer or simply signing an online petition to help others. Of course, one could argue that there is always 'more that you can do' - but in my opinion even the smallest change can make a difference.

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**Gaia, 15 years old, Italy:**

I think being useful to other people in ways that don't necessarily give you any material advantages is important, especially while growing up, because it gives you the chance to widen your view of the world and the people around you who might be in need (even though you might never meet or see them).

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**Maya, 17 years old, USA:**

I've done some charity work with school, and I think that is a really cool way to get involved, because you get to be with your friends and have fun with them, and at the same time help other people who really need it.

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**Nelly, 17 years old, Mexico:**

One of the reasons I will forever think online activism is important is the way information is spread. For past activism & humanitarian causes, you'd march and rally and protest, but for your message to be heard, you'd have to rely on mainstream media. You essentially cut the middle man out, bringing causes that people would otherwise never hear about to the forefront of the conversation. Ex.- how the mass media has handled #BlackLivesMatter vs Social Media.

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**Anonymous, 17 years old, France:**

I feel like online humanitarianism is where the future is going/already there. With things like kick starters and fund me's, it's so easy to give. So yeah I believe it is a valid form of humanitarianism because you're still helping someone even though it might not be face-to-face with them. With it being online things are able to spread quicker and more people will be able to help/contribute.

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**Cedric, 18 years old, USA:**

That's why I find online activism to be such a wonderful development. Instant, worldwide communication and easy access to information has opened up a whole new world for people who might otherwise be barred from participating in humanitarian work. People can share their thoughts, find communities of like-minded activists, organize events, put their name to petitions, donate money to people in need, and so much more. Internet activism is one of the few areas I don't feel excluded and inadequate; even if I can't join up with the Peace Corps and go build houses in developing countries, I can assert my presence, make my voice heard, and do my part to make the world a better place.

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**Kate, 18 years old, UK:**

I think there's an interesting question on whether so-called 'slacktivism' helps or hinders movements – I am not aware of any proper research about this – but in my opinion the kinds of people who would only change their icons or retweet one thing, probably wouldn't have done ANYTHING before Social Media, and even that little thing helps with visibility for a cause.