FRAMING HOPE: ANALYZING NGO COMMUNICATION ON INSTAGRAM ABOUT MIDDLE EASTERN REFUGEES

Jyväskylä University
School of Business and Economics

Master's Thesis

2023

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Subject: Digital Marketing and Corporate Communication
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ABSTRACT

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Title	
NGO Communication on Refugees from Middle East on Instagram	
Subject Digital Marketing and Corporate Communication	Type of work Master Thesis
Date November 2023	Number of pages 80

Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to provide an overview of NGO communication on Instagram, specifically for Middle Eastern refugees. NGOs use Instagram as a platform for raising awareness, sharing their work, and increasing the reach of their donation campaigns. There has been little profound academic work on how NGOs communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram. Although it has been almost ten years since the 2015 refugee crisis brought the topic of Middle Eastern refugees to the European context, there is still an influx of MENA refugees even today. The research seeks to identify what aspects NGOs focus on when communicating about refugees. The research is conducted for European NGOs focusing on humanitarian work, working with refugees on the spot or coordinating them from abroad.

The framework of this study was based on earlier studies and previous concepts on NGO communication. The empirical content of the thesis was collected through interviews with NGO representatives from five European non-governmental organizations. The qualitative study method was chosen to develop a deep understanding of the topic of the study.

NGO Communication was not studied on the Instagram platform before, primarily focusing on Middle Eastern refugees. The study provides information on several types of communication and better explains the complicity of the influx of Middle Eastern Refugees. The research shows that NGOs focus on the ethical side of communication when bringing awareness to Middle Eastern refugees.

Key words
Refugee crisis, NGO communication, NGO communication on Instagram, refugees from Middle East

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1 INTRODUCTION

Seeking asylum is a human right.
- AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

In 2015, a photo of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian refugee, went viral. Aylan, or Alan, the name by which the Western world knows him, was found drowned on a Turkish beach. His death started a wave of solidarity in Europe (Adler-Nissen et al., 2020).

It was civilians and volunteers who decided to help refugees arriving in Europe between 2015 and 2016. NGO lobby activities had an important role in addressing the refugee crisis and influencing policies to create laws that protect refugees (Muraleedharan & Bryer, 2020).

NGOs received higher social media engagement and responsivity when communicating about Syrian refugees than governments. NGOs had a specific way of managing social media, bringing them more online attention (del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Germany was the leader in opening the borders to refugees. On the other hand, several southern and eastern countries have closed their borders (Maurer et al., 2022). Leaders of Europe were facing challenges in putting the refugee crisis under control and needed to take responsibility for refugees (Murray & Longo, 2018).

Aylan Kurdi's photo absorbed social media and changed the narrative about refugees. For non-governmental organizations, communication on social media platforms held immense value. They saw social media as a tool for sharing information and as a dynamic space enabling participation and connection. Social media primarily functions as a way of participation and connection that facilitates collaboration (Gaál et al., 2015). During the refugee crisis, social media communication was used to raise awareness about gaps in refugee policies, human rights violations, inadequate support systems, developing capacities aimed at migrants, or research. Nevertheless, NGOs still need more specific research on social media communication, particularly concerning engaging audiences, addressing relevant factors when communicating with refugees, and prioritizing key aspects during these communications (del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

This master thesis was written during the ongoing bombing of the Gaza Strip in Palestine. People are living in a time where the audience is watching the genocide committed by Israel against the Palestinians in real-time (Dana, T. (2023).

During research on refugees from the Middle East, the author of this thesis could see the sharing of contributions between non-governmental organisations that urged an end to the bombing of the Gaza Strip or raised awareness on collections for food and medical supplies in this area.

Conflicts like this are significant not only for their tendency to cause large-scale loss of lives but also for their long-term impact on the local economy, politics, and social system (Saleh et al., 2023).

Knowing how NGOs communicate about refugees is essential in a conflict like this. Finally, it is essential to note that while writing this thesis, software powered by artificial intelligence (AI) was on the rise. From an ethical point of view, it is therefore essential to state how these tools were used in conducting this study. The author used Grammarly and Chat GPT 4, which were used to support language fluency, the flow of the thesis chapters, and assistance with text editing. During data collection through interviews, Decript was used, which converted audio to text from spoken interviews to written transcripts.

1.1 Research aim and objective

Previous studies, such as Media Representations of Asylum Seekers: A Multi-modal Analysis of Online Articles of the Guardian and the Daily Mail by Anna Kanervirta (2018), applied critical discourse analysis approaches to investigate communication about refugees or European NGOs and the Refugee Crisis in two British newspapers. Kanervirta (2018) found distinct differences in asylum seekers' representations in the Daily Mail and the Guardian. Daily Mail underlined a negative portrayal of dividing society between "them" (asylum seekers and "us" (Brits). This newspaper also used front-facing images, creating an aggressive tone. Guardian used less direct visual representation and did not regularly send negative messages. In their work, Carboni and Maxwell (2015) brought findings on how NGOs can communicate on social media to increase engagement. The authors stated that the type of post, together with post length, frequency of adding posts on social media and spending on an advertisement, affects engagement.

However, the proposed study addresses a research gap. While research explored the engagement of NGOs, there remains a space for stating specific communication strategies NGOs employ when communicating on Instagram about refugees from the Middle East.

The topic of NGO communication of Middle Eastern refugees has significant value for several Reasons. Firstly, the refugee crisis in 2015, also called the Middle Eastern Refugee Crisis, was the largest in history. This statement is also supported by the work of Culcasi (2017). Understanding how NGOs communicate with refugees from the Middle East on popular social media, such as Instagram, is important for the appreciation of their advocacy.

Furthermore, as Edgerly & Thorson (2020) state, a platform like Instagram has the power to share news and political content, shaping public opinion. This makes Instagram an essential medium for studying and researching NGO challenges and opportunities when communicating on the platform.

This research aims to fill the mentioned gap in the literature by providing findings on how NGOs communicate with refugees from the Middle East and their strategies for shaping this communication.

The aim of the research objective is to summarize what the research is trying to achieve. Objectives describe the details according to which the paper will be developed (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 71).

The objectives of this work are:

1. To review the literature
2. To identify the methods for data collection
3. To observe the Instagram content of specific NGOs on the refugees from the Middle East in the recent past
4. To conduct interviews with NGO representatives that advocate for the refugees.
5. To identify communication strategies used for Instagram communication

1.2 The Research Questions

The research question represents an issue the researcher is interested in and wants to study (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 42). For this research, the research questions are searching for how non-governmental organizations should communicate about refugees from the Middle East. For qualitative sciences, the research question can suggest an existing relationship with the topic, suggesting that the researcher has some prior interest in exploring the topic through qualitative methods (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 42).

For this research, the questions are centred around understanding the strategies non-governmental organizations set to communicate on Instagram on the topic of refugees from the Middle East. The importance of social media directs this focus as a tool for sharing narratives. It shapes public opinion, which goes under activities NGOs working with refugees from the Middle East do.

For the master's thesis, the author set the research questions as follows:

RQ1: What methods do individual non-governmental organizations use to communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram?

RQ2: What are the main objectives of NGO communication on Middle Eastern refugees?

RQ3: What are the key challenges and considerations that NGOs need to address when creating visual content on Instagram?

RQ1 addresses the gap in this thesis research regarding the use of Instagram by NGOs during crisis communication. Understanding specific methods NGOs use is important to contribute to a broader understanding of communication strategies applied by NGOs.

RQ2 is responding to understanding strategies and effectiveness of campaigns on Instagram created by NGOs. This question examines the motivations and goals NGOs have when driving communication efforts.

RQ3 covers the topic of visual communication on Instagram. NGOs have a set of challenges when communicating online with refugees from the Middle East, and this research question aims to identify those challenges.

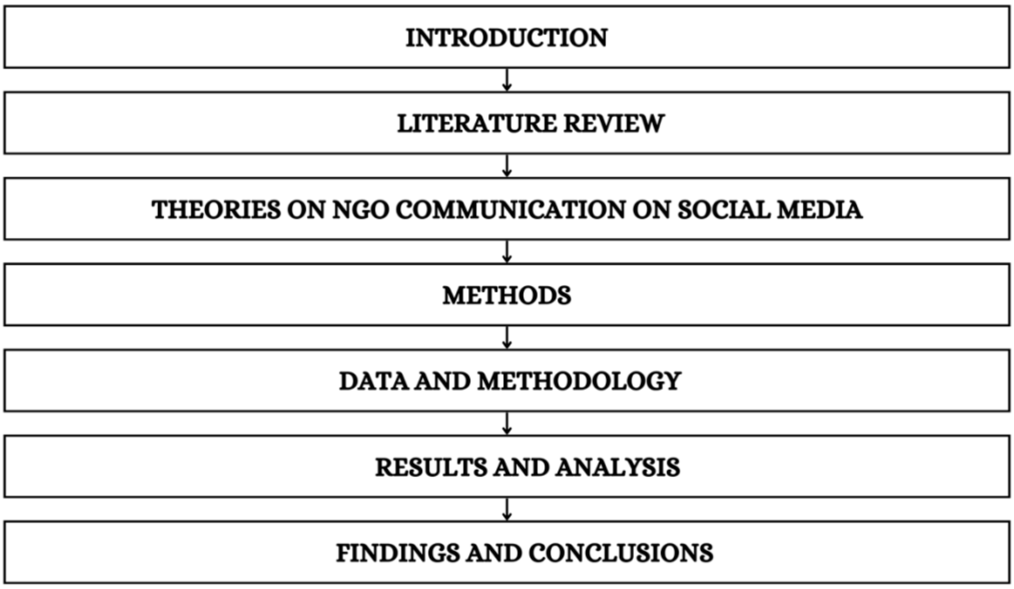
1.3 Structure of the thesis

The first part of this work is a literature review. Here, the author focuses on exploring the concept of non-governmental organizations' history and involvement in the refugee crisis. The author deals with the topic of the roles of NGOs in the refugee crisis, their communication strategies, and communications on social media. By focusing on these topics, the author is looking for deep knowledge about the development of non-governmental organizations, their responsibilities, and the communications they use to share information with society. Knowing the environment in which non-governmental organizations work with refugees is vital for correctly understanding the research and its subsequent processing.

As is seen in FIGURE 1. Structure of the Thesis: the structure continues with the chapter about Theories on NGO communication on social media, following methods, data, results, and findings with conclusion. In the second part of this work, the author identifies the qualitative method research that will be used.

Figure 1.

Structure of the Thesis



Refugees from the Middle East have a certain connection to the broader topic of refugees. It is essential to state that the author used thematic analysis to analyse qualitative research through interviews. The author believes this thesis can bring valuable research findings by applying two research methods. The interviews are conducted with designated representatives of non-governmental organizations. A common feature of these organizations is participation in communicating the refugee crisis.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is dedicated to reviewing secondary data research through a comprehensive literature review, which extensively examines existing publications related to the investigated topic (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 33). The author of this thesis has examined critical areas, including the foundational concept of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), their role in refugee crises, and aspects of communication on platforms like Instagram, specifically focusing on strategic and crisis communication. This part of the thesis is essential for understanding the intricacies of how non-governmental organizations communicate about refugees from the Middle East.

2.1 History of NGOs

Currently, there are more than 20,000 international non-governmental organizations operating in the humanitarian sector (Davies, 2015, p. 1). These NGOs play a crucial role in providing services to refugees and supporting government efforts (Atar et al., 2022). This section outlines the history of NGOs from the 18th century to the present, highlighting the significant developments and actions that have shaped their evolution.

2.1.1 The Establishment of NGOs

Establishing NGOs is an important topic with which the author tackles the ground information about NGOs and their work.

According to Cunliffe (1995), the history of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as we know them today, dates back to 20th century, with the founding of the United Nations (UN), which later led to the establishment of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in 1951. As discussed below, historical waves of NGO establishment show that this development was a response to the end of the Second World War, a period when non-governmental organizations gained the power to cooperate in law-making. Charnovitz (1997) categorized NGOs into seven historical waves, beginning with the Emergence wave in 1778, as discussed below:

- **Emergence (1775-1918):** This is the period where NGOs initially emerged, particularly philanthropic and charitable organizations. During this period, they were established to address societal issues, focusing on humanitarian aid and social welfare.
- **Engagement (1919-1934):** After World War 1, NGOs started to expand their activities and engagement. As a result, they started to get more

involved in international affairs, which involved addressing global issues and advocating for peace.

- **Disengagement (1935-1944):** During this phase, there was a decline in the involvement of the NGOs. This was mainly because of the onset of World War II and the subsequent restrictions and challenges that affected the society organizations during wartime.
- **Formalization (1945-1949):** There was a resurgence of NGO activities during this period, which resulted in the formalization and recognition of their significance in international development, relief efforts, and human rights.
- **Underachievement (1950-1971):** This is the phase where NGOs face challenges such as limited resources and lack of coordination, which resulted in the underachievement of the organizations compared to the previous eras.
- **Intensification (1972-1991):** After the challenges, NGOs experienced significant growth and intensified their efforts. As a result, they became more professional, specialized, and involved in advocacy work across various global issues, such as human rights, social justice, and environmental concerns.
- **Empowerment (1992 -):** In the early 1990s and ongoing, NGOs experienced a remarkable increase in their influence, where they expanded their roles in policy making, governance, and social change. More importantly, these roles were facilitated by advancements in technology and communication (Charnovitz, 1997).

From this point of view, it is possible to see that non-governmental organizations have been established since the 18th century. In this period, organizations focused on religion, charities, and missions were especially popular (Davies, 2015). Some non-governmental organizations have survived until today, such as the Roman Catholic Church. During the Emergence wave, NGOs mainly devoted themselves to solving common interests and influencing politics. These organizations later understood the importance of transnational cooperation and created the basis for establishing international unions (Charnovitz, 1997).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the interest of organizations expanded. Health NGOs such as the Royal Jennerian Society for the Extermination of the Small-Pox began to emerge, which spread awareness about smallpox vaccination under the patronage of the Princess and Prince of Wales. Soon after, the first known meeting to establish a peaceful society took place in London. In 1816, the Society for the Support of Permanent and Universal Peace was thus established (Davies, 2015).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the growth of non-governmental organizations dedicated to the subject of slavery was recorded. While most such organizations no longer exist, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society is still active today. It ranks among the oldest international organizations for the protection of human rights (Davies, 2013).

As a reflection of the shifting needs and surroundings of the times, each of these waves marks a different stage in the growth of NGOs. NGOs have developed from local initiatives addressing particular societal challenges to worldwide institutions with power impacting international policy and human rights from their 18th-century beginnings to their current foreground.

2.1.2 Introducing the first Refugee NGOs

In 1866, the General Peace Union was founded, which, together with other peace organizations, had an impact on influencing the development of international organizations and rights. In 1921, many NGOs were involved in the League of Nations Union to run refugee programs, a move instigated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which led to the election of the first High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921 (Charnovitz, 1997). The issue of refugees was topical as it was the post-war period - the First World War had ended. In this context, the International Federation for Human Rights (IFDH) was created to mediate law, equality, and freedom for all people, including refugees, the persecuted, minorities, etc. (Davies, 2014).

The 1950s and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) brought the greatest boom in NGO activities toward refugees. At the beginning of 1951, the Convention for Refugees was founded (Charnovitz, 1997). According to UNHCR (n.d.), this convention and the protocol in 1967 were critical documents for protecting and working with refugees, defining a 'refugee' as someone who flees their home country to protect their life from a possible death sentence (Steiner et al., 2003).

After the war, Europe focused on economic recovery, so many NGOs, such as the International Rescue Committee, were funded by American support. The UN and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) recognized the power of NGOs, organizing the Conference of NGOs interested in Migration in 1951. During this event, NGOs were credited with protecting refugees and creating a security gate for their resettlement process (Nawyn, 2010).

British Charity Oxfam was notably active in solving the refugee question in Europe between 1959 and 1964, growing in size and responsibilities through the Voluntary Committee on Overseas Aid and Development program sponsored by the British Government. Oxfam's activities were significant in solving problems such as famine (Hilton, 2018).

In the 1980s, during a famine in Africa, Muslim non-governmental organizations such as Islamic Relief Worldwide and Muslim Aid, founded in Great Britain, were instrumental in providing assistance (Davies, 2015, p.147). During this period, UHNCR started addressing specific challenges and concerns faced by women in refugee situations. Until the '80s, refugee surveys had primarily focused on men, leading to the omission of many daily needs for women, such as cooking supplies. UNHCR and NGOs began to address these issues, and the UN Charter for Women was created to work actively with activities to help refugee women (Steiner et al., 2003, p.105). According to Baines (2002), it was necessary to start addressing the problems of refugee women, leading to the creation of special camps for all-female populations in Pakistan for Afghan refugees.

In the 1990s, the United Nations subsidized non-governmental organizations for more than two billion dollars annually, creating programs for NGOs' training and material support (Reimann, 2006). In his article, Martinez (2002) stated that it is important For NGOs to apply strategic communication focusing on recipients and keeping donors informed. This approach will mandarin sustainable relationships with donors. The financial crisis in 2008 resulted in reduced funding, forcing NGOs to consider combining finance with transparency, but with limited results (Davies, 2015, p.165; Voluntas, 2017).

The historical development of NGO communication strategies provides essential context for understanding their current use of platforms like Instagram. In today's digital era, NGOs increasingly engage in offline and online relationships, with online interactions offering the advantage of transcending geographical limitations (Liu & Shin, 2019). This change emphasises how critical social media is to NGO communication plans.

Instagram has become a strategic media platform that can raise awareness and engage followers through images (Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2020). In their work, carrasco-Polaino et al. (2018) stated that NGOs use communication on Instagram as a tool to share their activities and their needs through photographs.

As stakeholder theory will be applied later in this thesis, it will become evident that communicating effectively with donors, volunteers, or the general public is essential for NGOs. This is also a part of NGO communication Instagram activities, as stakeholder dialogue between NGOs and organisations affects engagement as their relationships evolve (Burchell & Cook, 2013). This thesis studies NGO communication on Instagram, where communication with stakeholders is part of the disseminatio

2.1.3 NGO's during 2015 Refugee Crisis

The first wave of migration into the European Union's member states started in 2010, primarily from the Middle East and Africa (Yang & Saffer, 2018). One million refugees entered Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 (Brannan et al., 2016). According to Wieling (2018), the refugee crisis also referred to as the 2015 refugee crisis, has grown to be the largest human movement since World War II. The Netherlands, Sweden, France, and Germany—which took in nearly 500,000 refugees—were the top destinations for asylum seekers. The debate over how many asylum seekers each country should accept shook Europe (Hatton, De

Haas, & Egger, 2017). Non-governmental organizations participated in the 2015 refugee crisis and became active advocates for refugees in Europe (Simsa, 2017).

Among the organizations that were part of the protection and providers for refugees was the International Rescue Committee (IRC). This organization was dedicated to supporting refugees who landed on the Greek island of Lesvos. To this day, the IRC supports the integration of refugees in countries such as Germany and Italy (Franck, 2018). Another significant driving force was Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), or Doctors Without Borders. This non-profit organization is dedicated to providing health care for people affected by military conflict, epidemics, or disasters (Hanrieder & Galesne, 2021). During the refugee crisis, MSF was active mainly in Greece. The country's health care system would not be able to handle this onslaught during the migration wave. Thus, MSF provided health care in the camps and helped provide necessary items for refugees who continued to North-West Europe (Louis, 2016).

IRC and MSF are both International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). These organizations operate at international or global levels. INGOs bring together organizations that have similar values and interests. It's the same with members. INGOs are known for their involvement in humanitarian activities (Beagles, 2021). In 2015, 32,478 asylum seekers entered Finland (Perälä & Niemi, 2018). Finland stood its ground during the 2015 refugee crisis and did not close the borders. This situation tested the country’s commitment to international cooperation (Wahlbeck, 2019).

Apart from the work of international NGOs such as MSF and IRC, the governments of the EU member states tried to find solutions for the accommodation of asylum seekers. Some states created an integration plan, some placed refugees in camps where they were supposed to stay until the situation in their country was resolved, and some closed their borders (Piguet, 2020). Cooperation with local NGOs has become crucial for international non-governmental organizations and humanitarian aid (Adem et al., 2017). Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) lie with national or international organizations. LNGOs have a diversified interface of activities. Most often, however, they focus on a specific local issue or a small geographical area (Cawsey, 2009). Organizations such as UNHCR actively cooperate with partner non-governmental organizations to solve problems and find solutions for refugees. Thanks to these collaborations, it is possible, for example, to organize campaigns, engage with governments, or take part in creating public support. Local NGOs also share information with organizations and report significant events in their regions (Jasanoff, 1997). Adem (2017) states that international non-governmental organizations can access global resources. However, these organizations lack knowledge and experience in the affected areas. Local non-governmental organizations are an essential point here, as in their case, they have all the necessary knowledge but often lack funding.

2.2 Roles of NGOs in the Refugee Crisis

Understanding the roles of NGOs is essential when studying NGO communication. This section provides information on what roles NGOs cover during crises.

In times of crisis, a large number of organisations mobilise in refugee camps, where volunteers manage the provision of blankets, food, clothing, and tents. Volunteers also provided logistics and transported the wounded or sick to the hospital (Ilcan & Rygiel, 2015). This illustrates that it is necessary to emphasize the role of non-governmental organizations since they play a very significant role in managing refugees and facilitating their resettlement process.

There are a lot of refugees and internally displaced people in our world today, the majority of whom were forced to flee their homes for various reasons. One of the most neglected and occasionally ignored groups in the world is made up of refugees and internally displaced people (Murphy et al., 2016). The U.S. Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) suggests that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) could be crucial in serving as a humanitarian organisation and a bridge between host communities and refugees for this population. Humanitarianism is evolving into a type of humanism, providing direction for non-governmental organisations. In addition, the NGO is a policymaker discussing asylum seekers' prospects (Lester, 2005). As nations deal with an unprecedented refugee crisis, the state's relationship with non-governmental organisations is becoming increasingly important (Martens, 2002).

The UN may have differing views on the interests of non-governmental actors and organisations, which complicates their role (Martens, 2002). NGOs who work in the fields of health and humanitarian assistance often treat refugees differently. Non-governmental organizations are often recognized as being more politically involved. For example, a focus on these NGOs may reflect a recent trend in the policymaking of humanitarian intervention that holds to higher standards of policymaking (Martens, 2002).

NGOs actively advocated for refugees during the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Kaloudis (2017) discusses NGOs' role in advocacy, development, education, and agenda-setting. Many NGOs were, in fact, established to help manage crisis and conflict situations. During a crisis, organizations are often responsible for delivering life-saving aid. Emergencies are increasingly dangerous situations where the lives of workers are at stake. Non-governmental organizations are, therefore, establishing risk management systems to protect the safety of their employees (Schneiker, 2018). Bamidele (2016), in his work discusses the role of NGOs as an active body of conflict management and peace-building. With the rise of power among NGOs, their role shifted in many situations where these organizations, through education and organized events, push international institutions under pressure to accept new policies (Kaloudis, 2017).

2.3 The Genesis of the Middle East Refugee Crisis

This thesis focuses on refugees from the Middle East; the following section aims to bring the situation that led the population from MENA countries to Europe closer. To understand the complexity of the refugee crises, it is essential to be oriented in the geopolitics of the MENA - the Middle East and North Africa region.

There is not only the political reason that led to 6 million refugees fleeing by the end of 2015 (Ullah, 2018). The MENA region became the largest producer of refugees (Mencutek, 2020). The change of the region from the Arab spring continued to transform, and there became a synonym for complication (Ullah, 2018). Tunisia was the first country to experience the Arab Spring uprising in December 2010, and Egypt and Yemen followed. Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, Jordan, Tunisia, Lebanon, Palestine Territories, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, and Iraq are among the nations that make up the Arab region, and they are similar in terms of geography, culture, way of life, and mentality. As a result, circumstances in one nation may worsen in another (Albrecht & Ohl, 2016). The revolts in these countries were due to political and economic reasons (Del Sarto, 2016). The situation in the MENA region is related to international policy. The Arab Spring witnessed the international community taking the first role in shaping the region's future. The Arab Spring encompassed a series of uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa, demanding political reforms and social change. It prompted significant international involvement, highlighting the power of social media in mobilization while presenting challenges and opportunities for NGOs in navigating complex political landscapes and advocating for rights amidst regional turmoil.

The international communities, such as the United Nations, in a coalition with other world leaders, responded to the Arab Spring through their involvement with the aim of shaping their future (Bergling et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this policy was a complete failure, and more violence was to come, leading to an even greater humanitarian crisis and destruction in the countries. In September 2011, political activists and representatives from several Syrian provinces held an unauthorized meeting in Istanbul's Taksim square. The goal of the gathering was to promote unity among Syrians and opposition to Assad's regime (Zisser, 2017). The failure of the gathering led to the start of the Syrian uprising that later spread to different regions. Damascus was the first region where the uprising was organized. Around 30 March 2012, the violence led to a violent military response from the security forces employed in 2011; Syria responded against the government, which led to the most severe humanitarian crisis in the country (Atar et al., 2022). At that time, Turkey supported an 'open-door' policy for its neighbouring counties (Albrecht & Ohl, 2016).

As cited by Bayar and Gavriletea (2018), the Middle East and North Africa saw an increase in terrorism due to the events intended to bring democracy and stability to the MENA region. Both the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda gained notoriety in 2011 in the Middle East and North Africa when they overthrew governments and used violence against them (Morris et al., 2021). Mosul, the second-biggest city in Iraq, fell under the control of the Islamic State three years later. It is now known as ISIS, or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. In the 2014 Syria conflict, where opposition forces broke out in the Civil War, ISIS also emerged as the victorious army. ISIS kept control of roughly 1.5 million citizens. Many Mosul residents fled the country or moved from the city to the cities in the north (Lafta et al., 2018). Another event occurred in 2015 when the Government of Afghanistan lost control of its significant territory. The Taliban - Emirate of Afghanistan is a religious policy fraction that has been an ongoing conflict in Afghanistan for years (Murtazashvili, 2015).

As the political system, the conflicts, failed governance, failed security institutions, government corruption, and wars continued in the MENA, many of its citizens left the country behind and started the long journey to European borders.

2.4 2015 Refugee Crisis

The 2015 refugee crisis was the most significant event that shaped communication with refugees from the Middle East on social media. In 2013, the EU member states adopted the Dublin III Regulation (Soysüren & Nedelcu, 2022). The main elements of the regulation were crisis management, provisions for protecting victims of trafficking in persons, and anti-trafficking measures. The regulations demand a central registry for all suspected cases of trafficking in persons in EU members of applicants, greater legal clarity, and so on (Morgades-Gil, 2015). It is appropriate to say that the Dublin III regulation influenced how individual EU countries responded to the refugee crisis in 2015. This regulation set a process that meant that the first country that receives a refugee is responsible for processing their asylum claim. In practice, for countries like Greece and Italy, the countries on the external border were the primary recipients of refugees. In 2015, the countries of the external border came under tremendous pressure to provide support such as refuge, health care, and education for refugees (Gunst et al., 2019).

Apart from this aspect, the Dublin III regulation also gave rise to the so-called "Dublin transfers," in which asylum applicants were transferred to nations in charge of processing their applications (Gotsova, 2015). However, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland refused to participate in the relocation, which caused tensions between EU members. As a result, there was a greater influx of refugees to nations like Germany and Sweden. The European Union's response to the refugee crisis lacked specific leadership, which resulted in most refugees landing in Greek islands where humanitarian aid was lacking (Mason, 2018). In 2015, around 1.25 million refugees arrived at the EU borders (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). For the crisis on such terms, the Dublin system did not work. This crisis showed a lack of leadership in the EU, where maintaining refugee protection and safety was met with the EU's inability to persist in its image as a problem-solver (Murray & Longo, 2018).

Refugees met several obstacles to a safe life right from the beginning. Choosing to cross borders sailing in an inflatable boat or being packed in a truck is not a result of a functional welcoming policy. To be issued a visa to the EU, the applicant has to provide proof of willingness with the ability to return to the country of origin. To travel safely through commercial air and land transport, companies must ensure that all the passengers are fully documented migrants (Mills & Harding, 1983). At the same time, borders for crossing the EU were guarded, leaving little space for immigrants' safe and smooth arrival (Gerard & Pickering, 2014).

Immigrants arriving from the Middle East often choose to continue the 'route to Europe' that, to date, is a rough path that travels via Serbia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, with three countries participating in at least one leg of the route and three more closing their borders in 2016. Immigrants who chose the route mostly headed to Austria, Germany, or other Western countries (Kuschminder & Triandafyllidou, 2020). The surge of over a million migrants in 2015 from Syria and the Middle East resulted from the Balkan route's closure. When Balkan countries joined the EU, their border controls became more extensive, accompanied by restrictive asylum policies. The Balkan route became famous for the so-called 'The Game.' The Game stands for illegal attempts to travel through the Balkan to Western Europe, which are still carried out today (Minca & Collins, 2021).

2.4.1 Safe Havens and Refugee Camps

Refugee camps are often topics discussed when communicating with refugees.

In 1991, during the influx of Kurdish refugees from Iraq to Turkey, the UNHCR stated that not only the country receiving refugees is responsible for them but also the country that produces them (Ihlamur-Öner, 2013). In the European context, this position had the most significant collision with reality in 2011, when the war in Syria affected its neighbouring countries with a flood of refugees. Turam (2021) further mentions Turkey as the country under the most significant influx of refugees during the refugee crisis. In 2015, Greece also felt this onslaught, which was the main gateway for refugees from the Middle East to Europe. Furthermore, although NGOs seek to offer vital support and aid, there is a need for critical thought in response to claims that their actions may inadvertently encourage or facilitate immigration to Europe. In terms of communication, creating safe havens calls for a careful balancing act between the provision of basic services and the larger consequences and perceptions associated with migration to Europe. It goes beyond just alerting affected communities to the existence of non-governmental organizations.

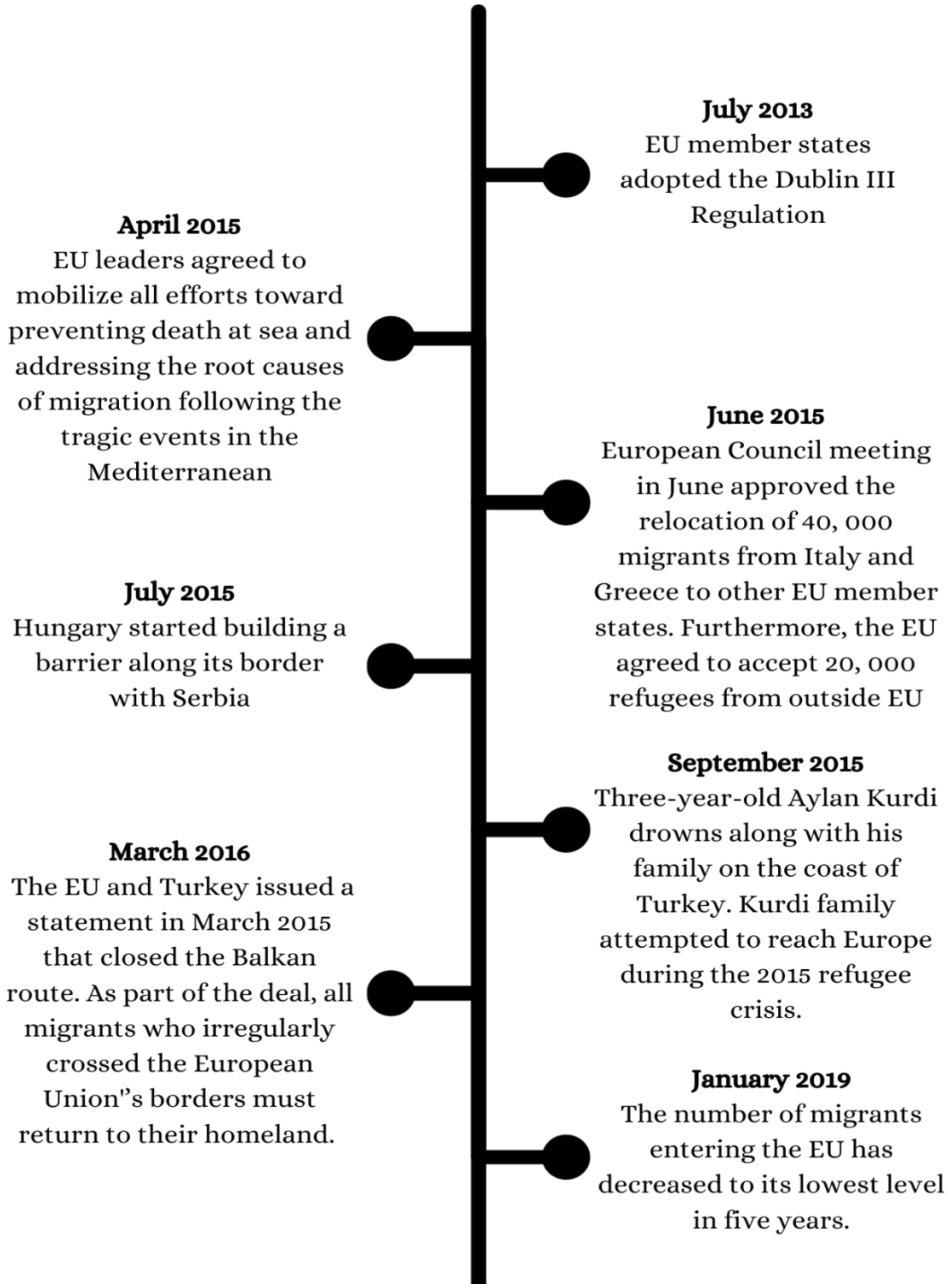
Refugee camps have an inherent link to safe havens. Refugee camps offer temporary accommodation and protection for people fleeing the country (Yildiz & Uzgoren, 2016). As stated in the Geneva Convention, people who flee their home country are asylum seekers until they are accepted by the country under which they become refugees (van Berlaer et al., 2016). Determining where and when the first refugee camp was built is difficult. In European refugee camps, activity on the part of non-governmental organizations dominated. In Greece, local NGOs participated in building shelters for refugees (Chtouris & Miller, 2017). In Belgium, the NGO Médecins du Monde built a hospital in a Brussels refugee camp (van Berlaer et al., 2016). Mahmoud and Roberts (2018) report that NGOs active in refugee camps face challenges, especially in assisting specific groups of refugees.

FIGURE 2. Timeline - EU migration and asylum policy graphically represents the timeline of the most significant events shaping the 2015 refugee crisis. The EU migration asylum policy started shaping in 2013 by adopting the Dublin III regulation. From April 2015, when EU leaders were actively addressing the situation on the sea, the 2015 refugee crisis was on the rise. In June 2015, the European Council approved the relocation of 40,000 refugees from Greece, following July 2015 when Hungary started building a barrier on the Serbian border. September 2015 was written into history by the tragic death of Syrian boy Allan Kurdi. This affected the EU leader's attitude towards refugees. In March 2016, the Balkan route was shut down, preventing irregular European Union entry. In January 2015, the European Union reported the lowest number of migrants entering the EU.

This timeline shows the events that aligned with each other in short periods, which created a tense situation in the EU during the 2015 refugee crisis.

Figure 2.

Timeline - EU migration and asylum policy



Note: Timeline - EU migration and asylum policy (European Council, n.d.)

Organizations working in refugee camps confront particular communication obstacles, such as managing cultural differences and having restricted access to technology (Efird & Bith-Melander, 2018). Good communication is crucial in refugee camps because it enables NGOs to give inhabitants important information, such as access to resources and help in emergencies. Additionally, as Green (2017) mentioned, communication attempts might be impeded by language barriers and low literacy rates among refugees. Organizations must figure out how to provide crucial information in formats and languages understandable to refugees.

2.5 Escaping Conflict: Ukrainian Refugees

During the work on this thesis, the situation between Russia and Ukraine escalated, which brought an influx of Ukrainian refugees to Europe. Refugees from Ukraine and NGO communication with them were mentioned several times during the research of this thesis. The following subchapter discusses communication between Ukrainian refugees and refugees from the Middle East.

The Russian-Ukrainian war brought a significant situation to Europe that affected the balance of the global economy (Mariotti, S., 2022). Delanty (2023) refers in his work to the war in Kosovo in 1998, where Slobodan Milošević led a war mainly against the Muslim Albanian Kosovans, culminating in the genocide in Srebrenica. He states that some problems from more than 20 years ago are also related to the current war in Ukraine. The Kosovo War caused massive displacement and humanitarian crises, especially because of the ethnic tensions and violence directed towards the Muslim Albanian Kosovans. Delanty presumably draws attention to the lasting effects of previous conflicts on refugee experiences by making a comparison to the current Ukrainian refugee issue. Both scenarios include widespread displacement, disrupted livelihoods, and humanitarian crises brought on by hostilities and violence.

In the context of refugees, Konstantinov et al. (2023) state that the war in Ukraine has led to the largest global crisis of the 21st century, requiring more than 7 million people to be relocated across Europe. This significant change for Europe ended the peace order that prevailed after 1945 (Delanty, 2023). The reaction to the refugees from Ukraine also brought studies on how this situation was covered on social media. Palmgren et al. (2023) state in their work that Ukrainian refugees have been compared to Muslim refugees in articles on social media, where they argue for the differences between these groups in terms of geographic location and area of origin. Social media users may highlight disparities in the representation and treatment of these immigrant groups depending on where they came from. Social media plays a big part in educating the public about these refugee situations. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram function as conduits for distributing information, constructing stories, and swaying public perception. Social media can exacerbate or reinforce prejudices when it comes to Ukrainian and Muslim refugees, portraying one group as more sympathetic or relatable than another based on shared experiences or geography, potentially marginalizing or ignoring the difficulties encountered by other groups. Talabi et al. (2022) claim that social media plays a key role in storytelling that helps refugees from Ukraine get help. When comparing responses to these two groups of refugees (Ukrainians and Muslims), it can be seen that the reaction to immigration also depends on the feeling of threat due to the arrival of refugees (Palmgren et al., 2023).

2.6 Racism and Public Response to the Refugee Crisis

During the refugee crisis, Europe was hit with views about refugees, which were frequently based on racism and xenophobia. Those views affected the public response to the refugee crisis. In the following section, the author discusses the negative public response to refugees from the Middle East.

Due to neoliberal policies' detrimental effects on job precarity and social safety nets, Islamophobia was increasingly prevalent in East Germany and East Central Europe (Kalmar, 2020). Studies have demonstrated unfavourable media portrayals of refugees, frequently depicting them as threatening the welfare system in countries such as Italy (Berry et al., 2016). Portraying refugees in such a way has made the refugee problem politically charged and made some nations reluctant to offer assistance. Organizations working with migrants needed more comprehensive media coverage and space for communication with the public. In their work, Trebbe & Schoenhagen (2011) state that migrants strive for higher representation in media but with better representation of minorities.

NGOs and the UN have actively advocated for stricter border regulations (Berry et al., 2016). However, it is essential to acknowledge that organisations dealing with refugees encounter substantial communication hurdles.

2.6.1 Positive Experience with Refugees from the Middle East

The 2015 refugee crisis received a lot of media attention. Reactions to refugees from the Middle East differ from nation to nation (Kluknavská et al., 2021). The way Germany has handled migrants has become a shining example. Ayoub (2019) addresses Germany's successful reaction to the migration issue in his paper, whether due to media coverage or another stimulus.

Several factors influenced the positive response to refugees in 2015 (Ayoub, 2019). Various narratives appeared in the media that influenced public opinion. The authors addressed topics such as gender narrative or 'bad' and 'good refugees' (Nerghes & Lee, 2019). By sharing photos from the Mediterranean Sea, or perhaps the most famous portrait of the refugee crisis - the photo of Aylan

Kurdi, many reactions had a wave of solidarity (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019). In the case of Germany, the positive response was also influenced by the political discourse brought by the current chancellor, Angela Merkel. Her effort was to plant a 'Culture of welcome' in Germany, where the slogan 'We can do it' became famous for her (Conrad & Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017). Merkel's bold step, which changed Germany's geopolitics, was based on Germany's strong economic stability and highlighted the need to help human beings (Mushaben, 2017). From this point of view, it can be deduced that the moral responsibility to help others was another trigger that influenced the positive response to refugees (Conrad & Aðalsteinsdóttir, 2017).

On the part of non-governmental organizations, their effort to manage a positive response to refugees was evident. Non-governmental organizations are critical in shaping public opinion about a mediatized problem (Fröhlich & Jungblut, 2018). NGOs had the role of a kind of logistical means that brought information and stories from the events while managing the refugee crisis. Stories effectively showcase cases of forced migration (Eastmond, 2007).

2.7 Crisis Communication

In 2015, non-governmental organizations were an active force that participated in helping and advocating for refugees. Public opinion was influenced by several narratives, which, on the one hand, discussed the fact that millions of people had to flee and leave their homes; on the other hand, dangerous events related to riots and attacks began to appear in Europe (Yang & Saffer, 2018). In the wake of these events, NGOs were exposed to an increasing need for effective crisis communication (del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

In 1988, researchers began to focus on examining the topic of communication crises. In this period, research focused on determining several types of responses to communication strategies in crises (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). In the following years, in addition to crisis communication and its approaches, research was also devoted to stakeholders and their reactions to the crisis. Currently, the representation of crisis communication research in various fields, such as healthcare, management, or technology, is increasing. This fact helps to monitor the development of crisis communication across industries and its better application in real situations (Diers-Lawson et al., 2022).

When setting up crisis communication, non-governmental organizations face several challenges. They must mobilize as quickly as possible and often with minimal resources (Okada et al., 2017). NGOs often operate in a critical environment where, in addition to the organization itself, they deal with several stakeholders (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Crisis communication is an essential aspect of organizational management."

2.7.1 What is Crisis Communication?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, crisis refers to a "time of intense difficulty or danger." In her work, Diers-Lawson et al., (2022) describes a crisis as an event that affects stakeholders and the organization affected by the crisis. A crisis, especially in corporations and organizations, is usually seen as an adverse event (Xu & Li, 2013). In general, we encounter three characteristics of crisis communication. They are the fact that a crisis always affects the public, that organizations that find themselves in a crisis will affect the lives of people affected by the crisis, and also that a crisis in organizations will put stakeholders at risk (Diers-Lawson et al., 2022).

Figure 3.

Elements of Crisis Communication

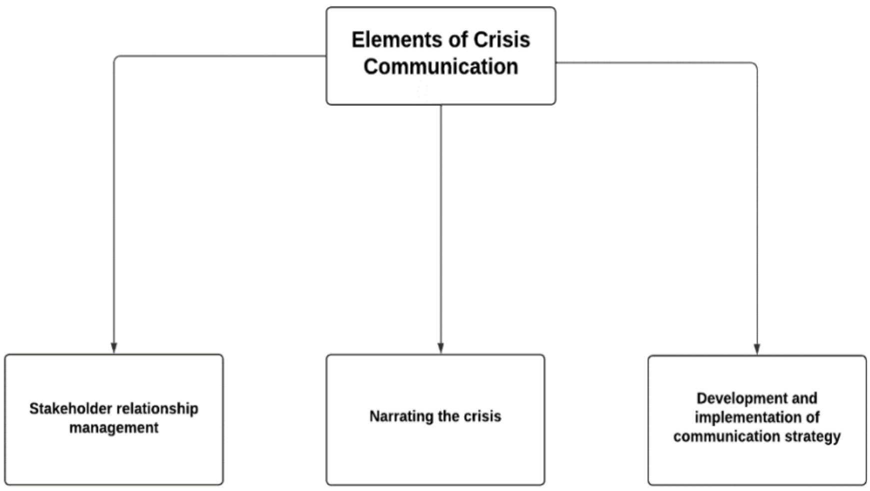


FIGURE 3. Elements of Crisis Communication visually represent elements of crisis communication. This Figure is inspired by the definition of handling crisis communication by Diers-Lawson et al., (2022). In this thesis, the author focused on three crisis communication elements. When applying crisis communication, organizations focus on several elements: At the promotion point, it is the management of relations with stakeholders, which either needs to be rebuilt or established depending on the type of crisis. Another element is the creation of a narrative for the crisis; this is where the media and online or face-to-face communication with various stakeholders come into play. Last but not

least, the organization will develop a communication strategy that will be implemented during the crisis (Diers-Lawson et al., 2022). Seeger et al., (1998) states that how the organization managed the previous crisis will also influence the management of the current one. A crisis does carry many emotions. The media is often a tool for transmitting opinions, and organizations must use their media space to rebuild the brand (Diers-Lawson et al., 2022). As mentioned in this chapter, several factors influence the course of the crisis and the management of crisis communication. Perhaps the most striking thing is the stakeholders' reaction and relationship with organizations.

2.7.2 Social Media and Crisis Communication

In recent years, social media have become part of everyone's daily life (Špoljarić, 2020). Digitization, together with the beginning of the use of social media, has permanently changed the way crisis communication is conducted between organizations and stakeholders (Lee, 2020). For organizations, crisis communication on social media creates mainly external communication (Fu & Lai, 2021). Today, social media is used to build relationships and trust with stakeholders. At some point, every organization will encounter a crisis that must be adequately communicated (Špoljarić, 2020). The attractive and interactive social media environment creates an ecosystem for managers in which they must learn to work. Social media creates an opportunity to respond to situations and adapt crisis protocols (Lee, 2020). Taekke (2017) states in his work that it is essential to realize that many stakeholders can interact on social media. Having the ability to interact with these stakeholders makes a difference for organizations.

Social media has many advantages in solving crisis communication. One of the most significant advantages is using crisis communication on social media to conduct dialogue with stakeholders. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become practical tools for monitoring audience reactions (Triantafillidou & Yannas, 2020). Veil et al. (2011) in their work state that social media enables dialogue with stakeholders to be incorporated into crisis communication. Technological media enable crisis communication to be managed in new ways, such as including education on a chosen topic in the plan and response to its response.

On the other hand, Taekke (2017) states that organizations face challenges when managing the communication crisis on social media. The author states that the hierarchical organization of organizations does not facilitate the creation of transparency on social media. In such a situation, the very culture of the organization also plays a problematic role.

It can be challenging for non-governmental organizations to manage the situation professionally while facing a relatively short time to respond to a crisis.

In such a case, quality education about the use of social media is essential (Schultz et al., 2015).

2.7.3 Crisis Communication and NGOs

NGOs were of tremendous assistance when the refugee crisis emerged in Europe in 2015, vigorously advocating for millions of migrants (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Organizations engaged in crisis response have a crucial role in aiding and interacting with impacted populations, according to Fu and Lai (2021). Crisis communication aims to engage stakeholders (Diers-Lawson et al., 2022). The European Commission put up a plan in May 2015 to better coordinate the resettling of refugees among EU member states (Boer & Zieck, 2020).

Under such circumstances, the crisis response teams' authority must protect persons impacted by the crisis (Harvey, 2013).

Although the interested parties in this situation cannot please everyone, they can win the public's support via communication and involvement (Del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019). So, a key component of crisis management for non-governmental organizations is developing crisis communication skills (Turner, 2008).

NGOs need help in solving crises. One is negotiating their presence in crisis resolution (Harvey, 2013).

In crisis communication led by non-governmental organizations, it is also challenging to take control of the work that the organization shares and present it correctly to the audience. Del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al. (2019) further states in her work that sharing crisis management is more difficult for non-governmental organizations than, for example, for corporations in the private sector. When dealing with crises, NGOs have several responsibilities, including logistics, planning, and crisis management (Kovács & Spens, 2007). Lee (2020) states that crisis communication creates a dialogue between organizations and stakeholders. NGOs must, therefore, take care to navigate their strategy to meet these requirements.

Špoljarić (2020) states in his work that crisis communication should occur across several channels. She also discovered that stakeholders prefer social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. For non-governmental organizations, the correct setting of crisis communication is also an opportunity to strengthen relations with stakeholders. In order to target such a relationship, it is necessary to actively include stakeholders in the strategy (Lee, 2020).

2.8 Strategic Communication

Strategic communication helps develop strategies for crisis communication. By determining factors for crisis communication, it is possible to track when specific responses to a crisis are effective and ineffective (Coombs, 2015). Strategic communication is an essential topic to discuss, especially concerning NGO communication during crises such as the influx of refugees in 2015 or current events. This section provides information on strategic communication for NGOs.

Sun et al. (2022) state in their work that non-governmental organizations operate in a dynamic environment specific to rapidly changing situations. Non-governmental organizations must create strategic communication that will help them achieve their goals (Duong, 2017).

Strategic communication, as already in its name - strategic, deals with the concept of having meaning. It aims to create strategies to achieve the desired goal (Gossel, 2022). For nonprofits, strategic communication is a crucial way to discuss the strategic importance of its objectives, which plays a role in formulating statutes under limited resources (Zerfass et al., 2018). Strategic communication is a significant part of the success of organizations. Its role is to help organizations maintain a good reputation and achieve desired goals (Mahoney, 2011). Strategic communication helps organizations react correctly to a crisis. When solving crises, it is not enough to communicate; on the contrary, such a step can result in a problem because the crisis is not solved properly (Coombs, 2015).

Strategic communication deals with creating processes that, in the event of a crisis, will give a clear plan in accordance with the goals and objectives of the organization (Goldberg, 2023). It is essential to understand that communication is dynamic for organizations that use this type of language, especially with the public. By practicing strategic communication, it is possible to use the extensive possibilities of the Internet or electronic communication (Conway et al., 2007).

Overview of Strategic Communication for NGOs

In their work, Fröhlich and Jungblut (2018) state that non-governmental organizations are key players in profiling communication during conflicts. NGOs represent a commitment, often defending the public interest (Kamat, 2004). Communication that takes place online requires synchronization across channels. This step creates a consistent user experience (Hart et al., 2005). Taylor et al. (2001) claim that strategic communication for non-governmental organizations effectively achieves the desired results. Fröhlich and Jungblut (2018) discuss that strategic communication is vital for controlling the media, public opinion, and public perception. It is, therefore, possible to say that strategic communication is an essential tool non-governmental organizations use.

Integrating Digital Communication Strategies into NGO Communication Efforts

The power of technology was the driving force for sharing solidarity during the refugee crisis in 2015. NGOs, organizations, and volunteers used the power of digital technology to express their solidarity toward refugees (Marino, 2022). Digital media is used to communicate in the context of forced migration (Nguyen et al., 2022).

According to Dimitrova et al. (2022), the increased discussion on refugees parallelly increases engagement on social media. Dimitrova et al. (2022) further state in their work that non-governmental organizations are key players in the migration crisis issue. Their activity on social media and the creation of awareness campaigns are of great importance.

Creating and sharing posts, texts, or tweets is part of crisis communication (Mason et al., 2019). When shaping digital communication and crisis response, NGOs must consider their broad spectrum of stakeholders (Del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Cooperating with the public and internal and external stakeholders creates the main flow of resources in communication (Mason et al., 2019). NGOs have the opportunity to bring information about refugees first-hand. When building social media strategies, they should bring true and credible information and refugee stories (Yang & Saffer, 2018). Mason et al. (2019) created a list of strategic points NGOs should consider when setting up a communication strategy. They are:

- The importance of honest communication
- Collaboration along with coordination with trusted sources
- Constantly meeting the needs of the media and ensuring open access to information
- Creating communication-based on empathy, interest, and compassion

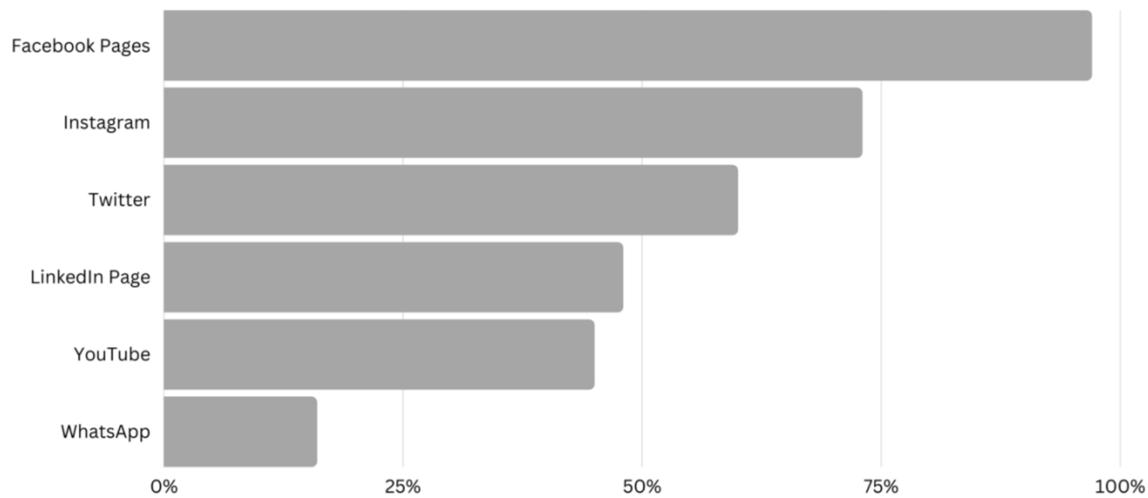
2.9 NGO Communication on Social Media

Many events raised awareness about refugees from the Middle East during the 2015 refugee crisis. Refugees from the Middle East are still discussed on social media by various NGOs that provide humanitarian work. This section focuses on NGO communication on social media, as understanding this topic is essential for further research development.

The public reacted strongly to a photo of Alan Kurdi in 2015 after his body washed up on a Turkish beach following his and his family's attempt to escape to Europe. When a picture of Omran Daqneesh, who was five years old at the time and covered in blood and dust after being rescued from a destroyed building and taken to an ambulance, was posted a year later, the response was significantly lower. Sajir and Aouragh (2019) further discuss this fact as a mixture of the rise of Islamophobia, a geopolitical agenda, and media framing that caused the deterioration of the political climate. Under such conditions, NGO crisis communication had to be established. Although several factors influenced reactions to social media, their usage has proven to be an effective communication channel for NGOs (Del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Non-governmental organizations are critical in creating public opinion on current topics (Fröhlich & Jungblut, 2018). For an increasing number of non-governmental organizations, social media has become a space where they can share information. Social media has become a space for NGOs' daily operations (Sun et al., 2022). For NGOs, social media are also helpful for creating communities, improving transparency, and mobilizing and collecting resources (Zhou & Pan, 2016). Sun et al. (2022) further state in their work that NGO social networks serve to maintain relationships with stakeholders.

Figure 4.
Use of social media by NGOs



Note. Use of social media by NGOs (Nonprofit Tech for Good, 2022).

The use of social media is essential for non-governmental organizations and their management of one-way communication (Campbell et al., 2014). FIGURE 4. The use of Social Media by NGOs shows that NGOs primarily use Facebook and Instagram as social media platforms. Instagram has almost 75% use. Understanding communication on this platform is, therefore, essential for NGOs. In the Internet space, non-governmental organizations can interact with so-called "free agents" who are social media users. NGOs can use such an audience to take a new action, such as fundraising through social media for a specific program (Zhou & Pan, 2016).

2.9.1 Challenges of NGOs using Social Media

In addition to the advantages of fast communication and the possibility to influence opinions, non-governmental organizations also encounter challenges that the management and management of social media create for non-governmental organizations.

Especially for NGOs, it can be challenging to keep up with the ever-changing environment specific to social media (Lee, 2020). Social media tends to evolve and change its environment constantly. These platforms influence the relationships with stakeholders that organizations create today (Taekke, 2017). For these reasons, it is necessary to determine the trends that different platforms change.

Another critical factor that can negatively affect NGOs is low funding. In many cases, NGOs do not receive any state support (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2014).

Not to mention, the dissemination of false information must be taken into account. Social media creates an environment where fast dissemination of unverified information is possible. Thus, this region becomes a prime location for the dissemination of false information (Caled & Silva, 2022).

Taekke (2017) states that using resources to communicate on social media is good. However, this step can cause management problems.

Non-governmental organizations must effectively use crisis management when communicating (Špoljarić, 2020).

3 THEORIES ON NGO COMMUNICATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Digital media is a universal tool used by individuals. They play a key role in the issue of refugees and migration (Nguyen et al., 2022). Social media has profound implications for NGO advocacy. NGOs that actively use social media have a tool for managing public opinion (Dimitrova et al., 2022).

In recent years, the topic of the use of social media by non-governmental organizations has not avoided a more profound analysis through the application of theories that pointed to the strategies and results of NGO communication on social media.

In this chapter, the author examines the application of various theories and on non-governmental organizations' communication on refugees from Middle East. This chapter aims to bring concrete methods and theories to show how NGOs can effectively use them to create communication that covers the topic, risks, and challenges refugees face.

In the previous chapter, the author of this thesis builds knowledge on establishing NGOs, the evolution of conflicts in MENA countries, NGO activities supporting refugees, and various previous refugee crises. This, together with understanding the concepts of strategic communication, crisis communication, and NGO communication, led to the selection of theories to be applied to this research.

The rise of social media has put NGOs into positions where they might face challenges and opportunities while being active and communicating online. As a social media for NGOs, Instagram helps to share information and support the creation of narratives by NGOs.

However, these platforms present some particular difficulties that need to be considered in the larger context of stakeholder theory and CSR.

According to stakeholder theory, non-governmental organisations identify and interact with a range of stakeholders who have the power to influence or be influenced by their actions (Freeman, 1984). In the context of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing refugee help, includes a broad spectrum of stakeholders, such as donors, volunteers, host communities, refugees, and public members. These parties involved have different expectations, worries, and areas of interest.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Stakeholder Theory emphasises an organisation's social and ethical obligation to stakeholders (Carson, 2018). From this perspective, NGOs can influence organisations to act on developing events like the refugee crisis.

3.1 Overview of Stakeholder Theory

In the past, the literature has not discussed much about the value of relationships between organisations and stakeholders (Friedman & Miles, 2002). According to Greenwood and Van Buren (2010), trust is essential for the relationship between organisations and stakeholders, as the stakeholders expect the organisations to return the rights to the stakeholders. In addition to these aspects, they play a role in developing the stakeholder role and the advent of globalisation, which has resulted in an increased diversity of participants and more significant technological changes expanding stakeholder groups (Waddock et al., 2002). The theory has gained attention since Edward Freeman's work; the theory has evolved in the past 25 years, becoming particularly relevant for research showing a more complex understanding of stakeholders' key role online (Littau et al., 2010).

Stakeholder theory is increasingly gaining popularity since 1995 (Laplume et al., 2008). Stakeholder theory states that organizations should consider how their actions affect all parties involved (Mitchell et al., 1997). From the perspective of maintaining relationships with stakeholders, stakeholder theory suggests that fragments of ethical principles such as trust, reliability and cooperation can result in competitive advantage (Jones, 1995). This statement is particularly applicable for NGOs working with refugees where the impact of actions might influence an organisation's stakeholder perception.

Stakeholder theory monitors the interconnected relationship between companies and stakeholders (Mitchell et al., 1997).In the CSR industry, Stakeholder Theory is famous when used in ISO 260000, where Stakeholder Analysis is applied (Hahn, R., 2013).

Friedman et al. (2002) brought insights into why stakeholders influence organisations differently, depending on the situation, strategic activities and reactions, and the conditions under which stakeholders communicate with organisations.

In the context of CSR, the application of stakeholder theory gained fame because of its practicality and ability to be incorporated into frameworks like ISO 26000 (Jamali, 2008). For NGOs, this translates into strategic communication on platforms like Instagram, where stakeholder engagement is about creating interactive and meaningful connections.

For instance, NGOs use Instagram for awareness campaigns, fundraising, and advocacy work, which exemplifies stakeholder theory. Their approach to content, interaction with followers, and responsiveness to stakeholder feedback are crucial in maintaining stakeholder trust and support. This is in line with Friedman et al.'s (2002) insights on the varying influence of stakeholders based on the situation and strategic communication. However, it is important to note that not all NGO approaches are equally effective; some may demonstrate a lack of stakeholder understanding or misalignment with stakeholder expectations, which might lead to challenges between NGOs and organisations through stakeholder dialogue (Burchell & Cook, 2011).

Applied theory also makes a strong link to research to this thesis. Supported by the following research questions:

RQ1: What methods do individual non-governmental organisations use to communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram?

In the context of Stakeholder Theory, RQ1 examine how NGOs use Instagram to communicate with various stakeholders. By stakeholders, in this context, we can understand volunteers, donors, refugees or the public.

RQ2: What are the main objectives of NGO communication on Middle Eastern refugees?

RQ2 covers identifying the objectives of NGOs when communicating with refugees from the Middle East. Stakeholder Theory emphasises the purpose of stakeholder engagement (Gibson, 2000). The question is linked with the theory by understanding if NGOs prioritise awareness-raising, fundraising, advocacy, or stakeholder education in their communications.

RQ3: What are the key challenges and considerations NGOs must address when creating visual content on Instagram?

Stakeholder Theory emphasises an organisation's obligation towards its stakeholders, which, in the context of NGOs, include beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, and the general public. RQ3 looks into how NGOs deal with moral issues when telling stories through images, especially when presenting topics connected to refugees. This component is essential because it complies with NGOs' moral obligations to their constituents, guaranteeing that their material upholds the privacy and dignity of refugees.

3.1.1 Stakeholder Theory in the Context of NGOs

NGOs engage with a variety of stakeholders such as donors, volunteers, beneficiaries, partner organisations, and the general public (Werker & Ahmed, 2008). NGOs can, through their direct or indirect activities, corporate strategies of organisations (Guay et al., 2004).

Recognising and managing different stakeholder groups requires understanding the concerns about marketing strategies, organisational politics and social responsibility (Savage et al., 1991). Integration of Stakeholder Theory into NGO communication involves distinctive communication approaches that acknowledge the interconnection of different stakeholder groups. NGOs working with refugees from the Middle East can be affected by their communication on Instagram because such communication can influence relationships with different stakeholders (Sun et al., 2021).

From this perspective, stakeholder theory offers a framework for NGOs exploring the management of social media communication. By understanding that NGOs are connected with different groups of stakeholders, NGOs can improve and build stronger relationships with stakeholders through effective communication on Instagram.

3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Stakeholder Theory

The main idea behind Corporate Social Responsibility Theory (CSR) is creating social pressure on organizations to accept more obligations toward communities (Carson, 2018). Arenas et al. (2009), in their research on the role of non-governmental organizations and CSR, discovered that NGOs are essential players in corporate social responsibility. However, their role still needs to be entirely and definitively defined. This subchapter focuses on understanding Corporate Social Responsibility in Stakeholder theory, as this approach might be used for research purposes.

Non-governmental organisations, especially those locally active in affected areas, play an essential role in humanitarian response (Roborgh, 2023). To compare, corporations use CSR as an additional activity that makes them socially involved (De Jong & Van der Meer, 2017). For NGOs working with refugee advocacy, those activities are the core of their mission, so while CSR refers to activities beyond the organisation, applying it in the NGO context forms the foundation of their existence. In this thesis, CSR theory is used to study how NGOs understand CSR by using their voice to pressure corporations and their social activities in a humanitarian context. In the business sphere, the use of CSR has increased since the 1990s (Breitbarth et al., 2011). Guay et al. (2004), in their work encourage the perception of non-governmental organizations as bodies that have the power to influence organizations in particular social actions.

From this point of view, by applying the Corporate Social Responsibility theory, it is possible to focus on investigating how non-governmental organizations' communication on the subject of the refugee crisis affects stakeholders. Communication, as one of the business functions, can be applied when creating a link between CSR and NGO functions. CSR can be adopted in the marketing and communication industry (Lodsgård & Aagaard, 2017). CSR can play a role in anchoring the organization's image, differentiating itself from the competition, or in the HR industry, as companies that prioritize CSR may attract employees who align with the organization's values and social impact goals, thereby contributing to a positive company culture and employee satisfaction (Lee et al., 2013).

3.2.1 Introduction to CSR

Since 2002, when a global survey of senior managers was established, it follows that CSR is a topic that is growing more and more in business spheres (Montiel, 2008). In their work, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) discuss the fact that CSR has many definitions. From the point of view of these authors, however, it is possible to define Corporate Social Responsibility as an action that requires that the company's behaviour is higher than just obeying the law. From the point of view of the stakeholder theory, it is possible to observe that the role of CSR is, in addition to attending to the company's shareholders, also taking responsibility for the interested parties who are influenced by the company's actions (Jamali, 2008). Adams (2008) states that corporations are part of society and obtain many benefits but often use them for harmful operational activities.

There are several concepts of CSR; Lantos devoted himself to dividing CSR theories into ethical, altruistic, and strategic. Windsdor, in turn, identified ethical responsibility, economic responsibility, and corporate citizenship. However, from the point of view of creating the most complex classification, the four types of CSR theory determined by Mele and Garriga (Okoye, 2009) were created.

The term "CSR pyramid" was coined for the well-known Caroll model. Carroll built the CSR pyramid in his previous study in 1979, in which he determined a range of business responsibilities (Carroll, 2016). This model became the most important in the understanding of CSR, and he believed that economic responsibility from the point of view of business is more important than legal and ethical responsibility (Baden, 2016). FIGURE 5. Carroll's Pyramid of CSR consists of four pillars: philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic (Carroll, 2016). Baden (2016) argues that this pyramid needs adaptation to life in the 21st century. Companies should put ethical responsibility at the top of the pyramid, followed by legal, economic, and philanthropy. For this reason, the author of this master's thesis did not take Carroll's pyramid of CSR as a reliable model.

Figure 5.

Carroll's Pyramid of CSR

Note. Carroll's Pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 2016, p. 5).

3.2.2 CSR and NGOs

Increased activism on the part of non-governmental organizations can be observed since the 1990s. The beginnings of relations between non-governmental organizations and companies were marked by confrontation between those parties (Arenas et al., 2009). Jamali and Keshishian (2009) state in their work that the activity of NGOs in recent years, mainly on the topic of CSR, opens up space for cooperation between companies and non-governmental organizations.

From the point of view of the role of non-governmental organizations and social responsibility (CR), NGOs should create activities that demonstrate their social role. Non-governmental organizations should be involved in satisfying social needs with their activities (Păceşilă & Colesca, 2020). In the topic of CSR, non-governmental organizations try to promote an ethical and social way of managing companies (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009). In the academic world, the topic of social responsibility is studied from the perspective of corporations (Păceşilă & Colesca, 2020).

Collaboration between NGOs and companies from the point of view of CSR carries valuable potential. However, it is characterized by a limited selection of activities that NGOs and companies have in common and the same low strategic value, interaction, and engagement (Jamali & Keshishian, 2009). This relationship between business and NGOs should also be perceived from the stakeholders' perspective and their relationships. Stakeholders are important players who can influence CSR (Arenas et al., 2009). It is essential to understand that social responsibility concerns the activities of all organizations that are contemporary society (Păceşilă & Colesca, 2020).

Jamali and Keshishian (2009) state that the success of the business-NGO collaboration is not accidental but is preceded by the careful selection of the right partnership. Bhattacharya et al. (2009) state that the concept of CSR is closely related to the power of stakeholders to intervene in the company's processes. According to Arenas et al. (2009), non-governmental organizations are one of the central stimulators in the implementation of CSR from the stakeholders' point of view. Non-governmental organizations are thus critical players in decision-making processes for companies and the Government. The activity and intervention of NGOs are therefore essential (Păceşilă & Colesca, 2020).

3.2.3 Applying CSR Principles in Stakeholder Theory to NGOs Communication

For many years, scientists have been discussing the relationship between corporations, society, CSR, and the context of stakeholder theory (Brown & Forster, 2013). The emergence of stakeholder theory has changed the narrow view of the company's purpose, maximizing economic profit. On the contrary, this theory stated the importance of creating value for stakeholders (Tantalo & Priem, 2016). According to Jamali (2008), the stakeholder approach to CSR provides a more thorough and helpful framework for comprehending and assessing CSR. Stakeholder theory is also one of the mainstream theories often used in the literature on CSR (Fernando S. et al., 2014). CSR and Stakeholder theory do not always share the same views. While CSR discusses the importance of companies taking ethical and moral responsibility, Stakeholder theory argues that ethical and moral responsibility does not go beyond managerial applications (Brown & Forster, 2013). On the other hand, the Stakeholder theory is set so that, from an ethical perspective, company managers focus their actions on satisfying all stakeholders and not only on profit production (Fernando S. et al., 2014).

For the needs of this master's thesis, the author decided to apply the principles of CSR and stakeholder theory in order to show how NGOs take their stakeholders into account when they share content on Instagram. From this point of view, space is created for the question of how non-governmental organizations approach open communication between stakeholders and their organizations. In the same way, this space creates the question of how important it is to the inputs, feedback, or comments that stakeholders can provide to non-governmental organizations. As mentioned in previous chapters, NGOs have a role in society and have the power to create a movement and pressure on companies from the point of view of corporate social responsibility. However, whether this pressure is created by NGOs dealing with refugees is a question. The author will also focus on this spectrum in the research itself.

4 METHODS

The primary goal of this master's thesis is to examine how selected non-governmental organizations communicate on the topic of refugees from Middle East on Instagram. The topic of refugees was investigated through qualitative research. The author of this master's thesis selected five suitable non-governmental organizations that deal with the refugee crisis and refugees and are active in this sector.

The following chapter discusses methods used to conduct qualitative research.

The author chose non-governmental organizations from several European countries to make the research varied. The author interviewed selected non-governmental organizations that included open questions on their communication on Instagram.

Interviews were subsequently processed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was chosen as a type of data processing due to the ability to identify and recognize themes in qualitative data, which contributed to the maximum use of data obtained from interviews.

By processing the research, the author obtained information about the processes, methods, and strategies used by non-governmental organizations.

4.1 Research Design

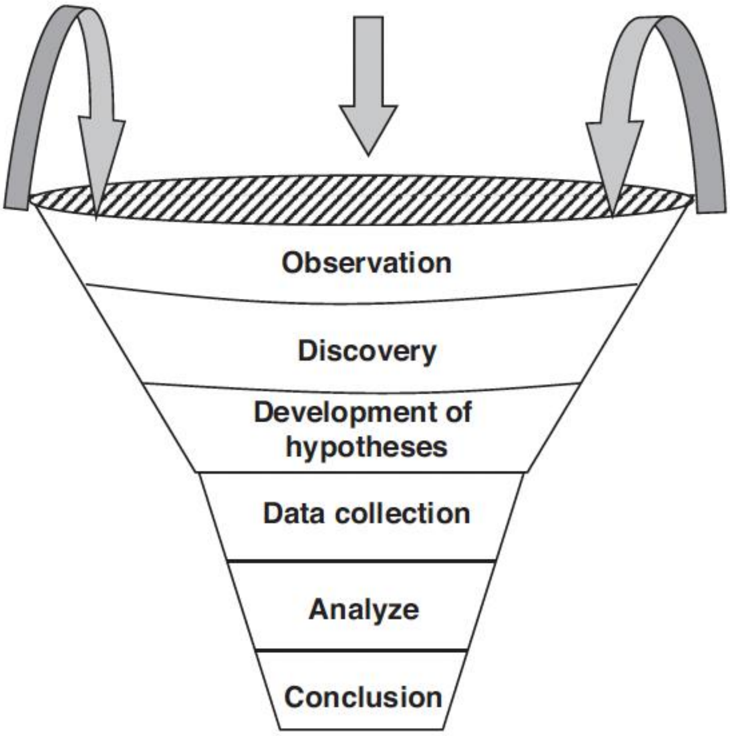
In the section Research Design section, the author shares information about research and research methods applied in this thesis. The following section discusses qualitative research, and ethical considerations considered when conducting research. This chapter confirms that the author had access to prior academic resources, ensuring the integrity of the research conducted.

4.1.1 Scientific Method

The book Essentials of Business Research Methods by Hair Jr et al. (2019, p.5) states that science is described as a body of knowledge on a given topic. The scientific method is used when the researcher works to obtain this knowledge. FIGURE 6. The Scientific Method Contributes to Business Decision Making Through Research describes the process of the scientific method. As is seen in the Figure, the upper part covers observation, research, and hypotheses. Those steps taken can cover the scientific disclosure.

Figure 6.

The Scientific Method Contributes to Business Decision Making Through Research



Note. The scientific method contributes to business decision-making through research (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 42).

4.1.2 Research Questions

According to Thabane et al. (2009), the ability of the researcher to capture the clinical problem in the research question is behind the success of any research process. The book "A Journey through Qualitative Research: From Design to Reporting" by Gaudet and Robert (2018, p14) describes choosing the right research question as a time when mysteries are created and solved. From this point of view, it is therefore important to keep the research design connected. The connection must be maintained between the research question, the theory, and the objectives of the work.

The task of the research question is to represent the problem that the researcher wants to address (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p.42). In the case of this master's thesis, the research question is devoted to the problem of communication by non-governmental organizations on the topic of refugees from the Middle East. While writing the thesis, the research question was modified several times. This process follows the theory from the book "Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource," where the authors Taylor et al. (1998, p.38) state that a research question is often refined after the author has spent a reasonable amount of time studying the issues of the topic.

After a sufficient study of the issue of non-governmental organizations and their communication about refugees from the Middle East, the research question is defined as follows:

RQ1: What methods do individual non-governmental organizations use to communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram?

RQ2: What are the main objectives of NGO communication on Middle Eastern refugees?

RQ3: What are the key challenges and considerations that NGOs need to address when creating visual content on Instagram?

4.2 Qualitative Research

In their book "Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods," Taylor et al. (2015, p.18) discuss the concept of methodology as a way of approaching work. This section provides information about qualitative research methods that were applied to this research.

In the field of social sciences, this terminology refers to the term according to which research is conducted. Under the term qualitative research, it is possible to introduce a series of systematic (methodical) procedures with the primary goal of creating an in-depth understanding of the social world (Burnard, 1991). From a historical point of view, qualitative research began to be widely used in the 20th century. Bailey (2014) further discusses in his work that the understanding of modern qualitative research gained its key elements as early as 1925 in the work of psychologist Paul Felix Lazarsfeld.

Since the 1960s, qualitative methods and methodologies have been redeveloped. This development helped push qualitative methods in new directions, and over the past decades, qualitative research has produced many important studies (Taylor et al., 2015). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research mainly in the skills necessary for collecting quality data (Taylo et al., 2015). The reason for choosing qualitative research is its rich data content that can be obtained using interviews (Gaudet & Robert, 2018).

Qualitative research is equally flexible and dynamic, which allows the researcher to discover the questions in the interview together with the participants (Taylor et al., 2015).

As mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, the research question was modified several times during the data collection and literature review.

The final versions of the research questions are:

RQ1: What methods do individual non-governmental organizations use to communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram?

RQ2: What are the main objectives of NGO communication on Middle Eastern refugees?

RQ3: What are the key challenges and considerations that NGOs need to address when creating visual content on Instagram?

This fact was supported precisely by the possibility of investigating the topic using qualitative research. The author of this work had the opportunity to observe how the participants work with the interview questions and immediately compare them with the existing literature.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

In order to protect subjects for research processes, it is important to establish ethical principles (Morgan et al., 2001). For this protection, informed consent processes are created (Jefford & Moore, 2008). The following subchapter focuses on ethical considerations when developing this research.

Ethical principles have a specific, in-depth nature during the research process (Vanclay et al., 2013). When setting informed consent, the participants must familiarize themselves with the objectives, goals, risks, and benefits that may occur during the interview (Jefford & Moore, 2008).

Subjects were contacted via email when informed consent was obtained for this diploma thesis. Each subject was informed that the interview would be anonymous and that the names and sensitive information of the participants would not be published. Jefford and Moore (2008) also write about this step in their work, stating that informed consent is intended to protect research participants through a detailed explanation of the process. When obtaining interviews for this diploma thesis, the participants were informed in time that the interview would be recorded for subsequent data processing. All research participants agreed to this step. Finally, the informed consent is also sent electronically to all research participants.

When conducting qualitative research, a key ethical precept is to preserve the confidentiality of research participants while protecting the data obtained (Giordano et al., 2007). Ethical dilemmas that the researcher must be aware of (Orb et al., 2001). The author of this diploma thesis maintained confidentiality among the research participants by informing them in advance about the anonymity that will be observed during the research. The data obtained from the interviews were also securely stored and processed by the author of this thesis. This step is primarily important as maintaining the anonymity and trust of the participants is a sign of quality research (Kamanzi & Romania, 2019). Considering the use of the Internet and big data, in the process of gaining trust, the author of this work solved the conflict with how the research data will be stored, further transcribed, and protected from the threats of abuse if they were stored in the Internet space. Kamanzi and Romania (2019) state in their work that data protection in the era of big data is possible through anonymization. When processing the obtained data for research, the author protected the data through anonymization. Numbers indicated answers, and participants' own names were not used when sorting data through semantic analysis.

Many academics who use qualitative methods for research believe that the richness of this type of method improves transparency (Moravcsik, 2014). The concept of transparency has become an overarching concern for the conduct of high-quality qualitative research (Bringer et al., 2004). Today, the topic of "how" to grasp transparency and "what" to imagine under this topic is debated (Kapiszewski & Karcher, 2021).

Academic papers mention several places where transparency can be applied (Hiles & Čermák, 2007):

- Transparency in paradigm
- Transparency in methodology
- Transparency in interpretation and data analysis
- Reflective transparency
- Critical evaluation transparency
- Transparency in communication

For the needs of this research, transparency in conducting interviews was used to explain the research's purpose and share information about how the data will be used.

Debriefing refers to a discrete moment in qualitative research where the findings and data from the conducted research are discussed (McMahon & Winch, 2018). In the context of the debriefing between the author of this thesis and the participants, the debriefing was the end of data collection when the author thanked the participant for participating in the research and the information the participant shared.

5 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research methods help us better understand the experiences of the research participants (McMahon & Winch, 2018). The task of obtaining qualitative data in research is to ensure evidence that will serve as the ground on which discoveries will be built (Polkinghorne, 2005). In this chapter, the author shares the data collection for research on the communication of non-governmental organizations on refugees from the Middle East.

5.1 Data Collection

The data obtained from the qualitative analysis is rich and full of nuances, and the researcher can use themes to analyse the results of his research (McMahon & Winch, 2018). In qualitative research, the type of data obtained and the language used to obtain it change depending on the researcher's attitudes (Polkinghorne, 2005). This subchapter discusses data collection acquired for the purposes of this research.

In this type of method, the methods of data collection also differ, which can be:

- Text analysis
- Visual analysis
- Analysis of interviews

However, the most common type of data collection is interviews (Gill et al., 2008). In this thesis, data collection was obtained using individual interviews. Gill et al. (2008) state three basic types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. This research used semi-structured interviews. The analysis of semi-structured interviews is designed to cover qualitative research needs (Bryman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are designed in such a way that they include several key questions that will help the researcher explore the research areas. However, at the same time, they carry a dose of flexibility that can bring unexpected discoveries in the research (Gill et al., 2008). For research on NGO communication with Middle Eastern refugees, the author of this thesis proposed 16 semi-structured questions. The list of questions was deliberately designed to be one to two questions related to each chapter from the literature review. In their book, Hair Jr et al. (2019) also attribute the importance of creating an interview guide that indicates the essential topics that need to be covered, the sequence of questions, and their wording. In this research, the guide was set up so that the participants first reflected on their knowledge about refugees from the

Middle East and gradually worked on the strategies they used to communicate about them.

5.1.1 Data Sources

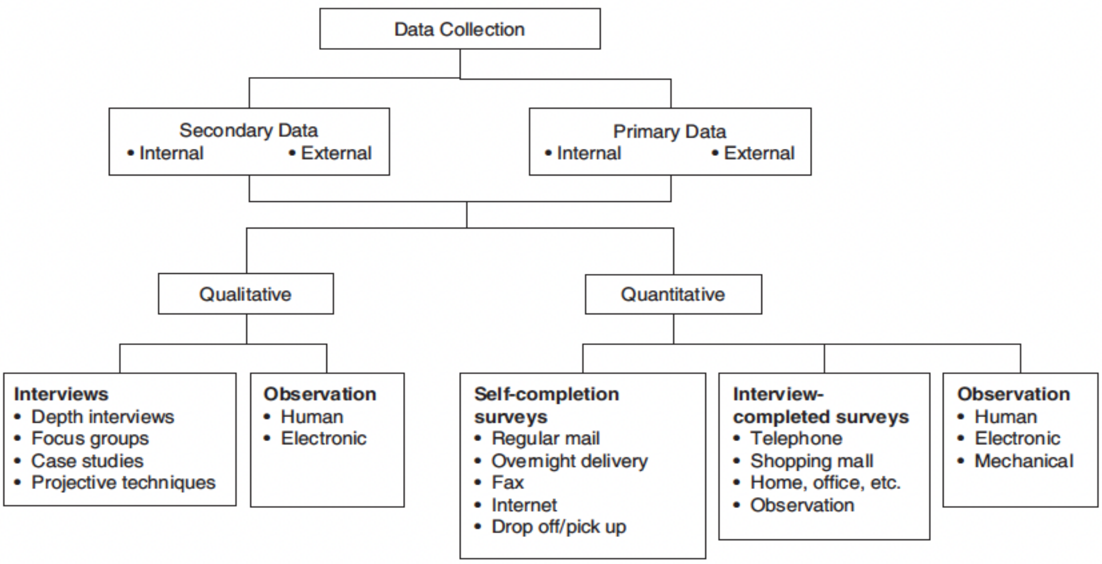
In qualitative research, diverse sources such as documentation, observation, physical artifacts, or interviews are considered data sources (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For this thesis, the data sources were interviews and visual digital artifacts in the form of Instagram posts. The process of obtaining data for research assumes that the researcher has considerable skills and abilities (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 203).

5.1.2 Primary Data

FIGURE 7. Primary Data Collection Methods shows Primary Data Collection methods. Primary data are types of data that are collected to explain a specific problem. These data are collected by procedures that best apply to a specific problem (Glass, 1976). In cases where the researcher found sufficient secondary data content, obtaining primary data is essential (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 204).

Figure 7.

Primary Data Collection Methods



Note. Primary Data Collection Methods (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 204)

For the needs of this work, the author collected primary data. In qualitative research, there are two methods of obtaining primary data: observation and interviews (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 205). The research on non-governmental organisations' communication with refugees from the Middle East was carried out through interviews. The method of obtaining data through interviews is appropriate, as this type of data acquisition can cover complex topics (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 209).

5.2 Sampling Method

In this master's thesis, the author used Judgement Sampling as a Sampling Technique. Samples are used to collect data effectively; this subchapter provides information about the sampling method used for the purposes of this research.

A judgment sample is a method of obtaining a specific sample for research purposes (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 193). For the purposes of this research, the author selected a sample of experts who are active participants in non-governmental organisations and departments that deal with communications on Instagram. In judgment sampling, the researcher selects a sample that he believes correctly identifies the target group; the correctness of the decision lies in the researcher's judgment (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 193).

As a frame of the population that was used for this research, there were experts in the communication of non-governmental organisations on the topic of refugees. Hair Jr et al. (2019, p.193) discuss the advantages of choosing this framework. Experts from the survey sample were directly interested in the activities and work of non-governmental organisations. Such a respondent has the opportunity to bring interesting data. The sample size was 5 respondents from 5 different non-governmental organisations operating in Europe.

Table 1.

Information Table of Interviewees from chosen NGOs

Name	**Country**	**Date**	**Time**	**Place**
Participant 1	Great Britain	31.5.2023	60:00	Zoom
Participant 2	Greece	18.7.2023	40:47	Zoom
Participant 3	France	20.7.2023	32:22	Google Meet
Participant 4	Slovakia	12.7.2023	26:44	Zoom
Participant 5	Greece	3.8.2023	26:20	Zoom
Total	**5**		**185,33**	

TABLE 1. Information Table of Interviewees from chosen NGOs states information on Participants from the research. As is seen in the table, participants

created a diverse European sample, including NGOs from Greece, Great Britain, Slovakia, and France. The length of the interviews varies; together, the author collected more than 180 minutes of data.

5.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data measurement is an integral part of qualitative research. If the measurement is done incorrectly, the research is affected, and the data is inaccurate (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 233). This subchapter provides information on the procedure of collecting data for this thesis.

Each qualitative study contains comprehensive data obtained either through oral presentation or text (Taylor et al., 2015, p.162). Creating good interview questions contributes to obtaining high-quality data for analysis (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p.281). Semantic analysis was used to process the data of this master's thesis.

For the needs of this master's thesis, the author chose the method of semi-structured interviews to collect data from research participants. Semi-structured interviews have a structure but, at the same time, offer flexibility for unstructured questions (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 210). According to Gaudet and Robert (2018, p. 103), the preparation of semi-structured interviews is crucial. This process helps ensure that the moderator can respond to newly created topics in addition to structured questions.

In this work, the author used in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data from in-depth semi-structured interviews are factual grounds for qualitative research (Campbell et al., 2013). To ensure the acquisition of high-quality data, the author created a protocol whose goal was to design interview questions. The protocol is used in qualitative research to ensure quality data acquisition (Yeong et al., 2018). The interview questions were designed to cover the information discussed in the literature review. The author created six topics that the interview questions focused on.

Table 2.

Constructs Table and Development of Interview Protocol

Themes	Interview Questions
Role of NGOs in refugee communication	Q1-Q2
Refugees	Q3-Q6
Crisis Communication	Q7-Q10

Strategic Communication on Instagram	Q10-Q12
Social Media – Instagram Management	Q13-Q14
CSR	Q15

In TABLE 2. Constructs Table and Development of Interview Protocol, the author stated themes and division of interview questions according to those themes. The themes for the research interview were created by literature review. The author created questions from the main topics discussed in the literature part of the thesis. This decision ensured that the author would receive relevant data for the research. As the thesis focuses on NGO communication on Instagram about refugees from the Middle East, it is essential to understand how NGOs that work with this group perceive crisis communication, Instagram management and topics of Middle Eastern refugees when communicating about them.

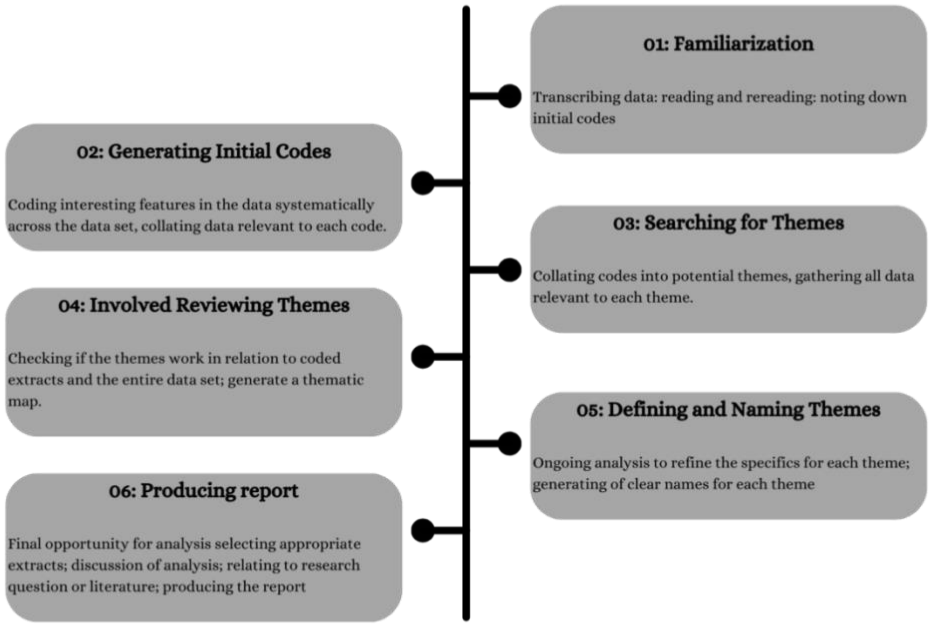
5.4 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used as a part of the thesis research. In the following subchapter, the author discusses thematic analysis and its importance in applying it to qualitative research.

Qualitative research is currently experiencing more and more recognition. Also, for that reason, it is necessary that qualitative research is carried out consistently and brings useful data (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is used in qualitative research to analyse and evaluate patterns contained in qualitative data (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Qualitative research processing is highly diversified, and thematic analysis is a basic method for processing these data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When applying thematic analysis, the researcher becomes a medium for analysis, evaluating codes, and assigning appropriate themes (Nowell et al., 2017). In their work, Kiger & Varpio (2020) stated that thematic analysis has advantages as a valuable and flexible method for building themes and coding for qualitative data analysis. This master's thesis applies thematic analysis to the task of meaningful processing and interpretation of data obtained using qualitative methods. The approach from Braun and Clarke (2006) will be applied for the reasons mentioned above.

Figure 8.

Thematic Analysis Steps



Note. Thematic Analysis Steps (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

FIGURE 8. Thematic Analysis Steps by Braun and Clark (2006) represent six steps of thematic analysis. When applying thematic analysis, the researcher must start with familiarising data, where the researcher transcribes the data. These steps follow with initial coding and searching for themes. After that, the researcher rewires the themes, defines and names them, and, lastly, produces the report. The following six steps of thematic analysis were applied during the data analysis in this thesis.

6 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter defines the results and findings of the thematic analysis. The thesis covers qualitative research on the topic of Middle Eastern refugees and NGO communication on the topic. The research task, which was carried out through semi-structured interviews, was to answer the scientific question. The research questions were:

RQ1: What methods do individual non-governmental organizations use to communicate about Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram?

RQ2: What are the main objectives of NGO communication on Middle Eastern refugees?

RQ3: What are the key challenges and considerations that NGOs need to address when creating visual content on Instagram?

This work aims to understand the complexity of non-governmental organizations' communication with refugees from the Middle East. The influx of refugees from the Middle East towards Europe was supported by events in MENA countries, from which over 6 million fled by 2015 (Ullah, 2018). Social media has thus become an effective communication channel for sharing information on this topic (Del Mar Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Qualitative research was used for the research needs of this topic. Qualitative research aims to understand the social world in-depth (Fossey et al., 2002).

In this chapter of the master's thesis, the data and their processing and analysis are presented to answer the research question.

6.1 Data Presentation

In this part of the master's thesis, the author presents the analysed data and the discoveries made during the research. Data were obtained in two ways:

The first method is through conducted semi-structured interviews, which were subsequently processed by thematic analysis. As a data processing method, thematic analysis provides flexibility that enables modification for the given study (Nowell et al., 2017). Data obtained using thematic analysis were further divided into themes and codes. Creating codes allows the researcher to determine a detailed data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). From the data obtained through interviews, the author determined five themes and assigned codes to them. Not all emerging themes and codes were relevant, especially for obtaining an answer to the research question.

6.2 Interviews

The interviews were conducted from May 2023 till August 2023. The preparation for the interview, like creating the protocol, was managed a few months ahead. In this section, the author is representing data from the interviews. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. In total, the author analysed five interviews from four different European countries. Each participant from the interview represented various NGOs, which brought diverse information and data to this research.

TABLE 3. The main themes from research interviews showcase the main themes developed from analysing interviews. The author identified five themes. The themes are then divided into initial codes. The codes assisted in the data analysis, dividing the data into specific groups representing final themes.

As part of the thematic analysis, five main themes were stated:

- Challenges
- Positive Reaction on Refugees
- Strategic Communication
- Measuring Data on Instagram
- Protocol for Instagram

Table 4.
Main themes from research Interviews

Themes	Challenges	Positive Reaction on Refugees	Strategic Communication	Measuring Data on Instagram	Protocol for Instagram
Sub-themes	Challenges in Communication	Managing Solidarity and Support	Data Analysis and Situational Assessment	Measurement and Effectiveness	Ethical Communication and Privacy Concerns
Codes	Encountering Racist Comments and Stereotypes	Educational Initiatives and Awareness	Crisis Communication Process	Measurement of Communication Effectiveness	Ethical Guidelines for Photography for Instagram Content
	Challenges in Collecting Instagram Data	Positive Messaging and Empowerment	Engagement and Interactions	Measuring Instagram Effectiveness	Protocol for Posting Images
	Challenges in Communicating About Conflicts	Positive Portrayal of Refugees	Strategic Communication Plan		

Negative Reactions to Refugee Posts	Collaboration with Corporate Partners	Raising Awareness Strategies
Absence of Pre-prepared Crisis Communication Plan	Positive Reactions to Refugee Posts	Stakeholder Engagement
		Capacity and Team Limitations

Theme 1 – Challenges

During the interviews, representatives of the investigated non-governmental organisations reported on the challenges they face in communication:

Participant 1:

> *"It's almost like you, if you talk about the wider conflict, then if you're balanced, you're going to really annoy quite a few people. So the only way in which to win favour, if you're posting about the wider conflict. is to be one sided. I don't really want to do that. So we basically tend to not really talk about the conflicts very much because I got the charity in the truck into trouble."*

Participant 2:

> *" You can have amazing content that just evaporates in a vacuum and nobody ever sees it. Uh, so that's a challenge and meeting the, the wishes of the algorithm. To get the exposure, um, that is a challenge, um, but then also communicating in a way that is not white saviorist."*

Participant 3:

> *"Sometimes it's challenging because we have to be very careful about the words we use and how we communicate. So it's very important and that's why sometimes it's a little bit challenging to speak also to like donors or people that are outside the organization because they don't, uh, sometimes maybe. Grasp or understand, uh, what is the, what do we do and what are, what is the impact?*

Participant 4:

"The problem, or the big challenge, was that our organization had 10 to 15 people. We had communication on social media as an extra extra thing. And we were the two who were dedicated to communication. So if our entire communication department suddenly didn't exist, or was significantly undersized, because we didn't have the space and capacity to devote a lot of time to communication and we communicated completely, probably the most necessary thing possible."

Participant 5:

" The challenges, especially on Instagram, for me, I'd say they are mostly the visual. So I'd say that's the biggest challenge, the visual aspect of it, then regarding the, uh, the... Basically, the description, the label, I would say, I haven't faced any limitations."

As seen from the presented data, the involved representatives of non-governmental organisations face different challenges. Several participants see challenges in the form of topics they can communicate about. From Participant 1, communication on the topic of conflict is met with a challenge where sharing balanced topics does not resonate well with followers. On the other hand, Participant 2 sees a challenge in getting content noticed on social media platforms because of the algorithm to which communication must be adjusted. Maintaining ethical communication is a concern. Avoiding a "white saviour" complex and ensuring that the communication respects the dignity and culture of those being assisted. Participant 3 sees a conflict in sharing information and establishing a relationship with stakeholders. There often needs to be more understanding between internal stakeholders and those external to the organisation. Participant 4 cites as a conflict of interest that their team was undersized during the crisis, and because of this, the conflict itself was resolved superficially on the social network. Participant 5 sees visual communication on the Instagram platform as a challenge. Creating compelling and meaningful visual content can be demanding.

Theme 2 – Positive reactions on refugees

The theme "Positive reaction to refugees" is primarily about the data related to the observed positive experiences encountered in posting on Instagram. These positive experiences refer to participants' positive comments, successes, and experiences.

Participant 1:

"So people tend to really enjoy the fact that they can actually see it happening, see the problem in real time, know what is most needed, buy it, and then people, generally speaking, seem to be very like, um, satisfied. Um, and. excited. The only downside with our strategy is that we tend to only be very popular when there's a crisis."

Participant 2:

"Um, where they basically may have just decided randomly on a new rule that, you know, 600 people, uh, couldn't get food anymore. Um, just like that and like no more official food distribution, uh, from the camp. And then we made a reel, um, and, uh, Was, I think the best performing reel we've ever had timely. And, uh, there are many reasons algorithmically speaking why that may be, but, um, very positive reactions to that."

Participant 3:

"Like we have a positive message to our audience and to our community, and that we don't always, we don't want to showcase like, refugees as like, uh, people in despair who are, uh, waiting for someone to rescue or save them. Like, not at all. For us, it's very important to show the talent, to show the positivity, the resilience and the strength of people more than the, the, like, the negative aspects."

Participant 5:

"So we do receive a fair amount of positive reactions. Um, so our, they also depend on our audience. So I would say there are two, two major factors here. The audience that we have, quite a big majority of them are people who used to volunteer for us in the past, or there is a connection between them and the humanitarian, uh, situation in Greece. So, of course, these people, since they have a more personal connection to the cause, they will always support, they will engage, they will like, they will share, they will comment our posts and stories. The other part that, to me, is extremely successful is actually managing to engage new audiences."

Participant 1 highlighted in their interview that Instagram provides real-time engagement with the audience, which allows them to communicate immediate needs and responses, boosting feelings of satisfaction and excitement among their followers. Participant 2 shared that they can respond promptly to crises through Instagram. Participant 3 focuses on spreading a positive message to their audience through Instagram. The non-governmental organisation's representative emphasises showcasing people's talent, positivity, resilience, and strength rather than portraying refugees as passive victims. Participant 5 is aware of the division of their followers into those who have already established a relationship with the NGO, such as former volunteers and followers whose NGO is gaining a new audience.

Theme 3 – Strategic Communication

As described in Chapter 2.8, strategic communication helps to build strategies necessary for crisis communication (Coombs, 2015). Strategic communication and its planning were also included in the interview questions. Participants had the opportunity to share how the non-governmental organisations they represent plan their strategic communication.

Participant 1:

> *"We've just gone and done the work that people want to, done the work that people want to support, done the work that is a great story in itself, so we don't have to frame it in a certain way. We'll do the work in these certain areas, and then when we're there, the press are all there, and then we have this great content for social media, and then because we're there in these places where the press is not covering."*

Participant 2:

> *"I wish I could give a different answer, but we, um, we do it in, yeah, quarterly, I mean, I'm reporting of the ideal case, uh, in quarterly workshops, we talk about how to plan our communication. Um, and like on a higher level.*
>
> *Um, a lot derives from the, sort of the overall strategy, um, planning, uh, that we do in the beginning of the year. And, uh, with that comes a lot in terms of the main, you know, urgent topics of this year."*

Participant 3:

> *"Like we always try to tag as many as, as many organization or foundation that support us or like, um, yeah, it's can be like private individuals, but also like support organizations or yeah, collaborators and partners."*

Participant 4:

"As raising awareness in these topics is also one of our main activities and priorities and it is actually a separate program for. When you communicate it on Instagram, that you are trying to share maybe some stories, how did they (refugees) cross the border and maybe get to Slovakia, or what do they need? Actually, why did they come? We also presented this at the conference we had and also communicated it on social networks."

Participant 5:

"Yes, we do. We try to at least. Um, like we do have a strategic plan that we say like every more or less two weeks. So at the beginning. Of two weeks, we will gather, our team is going to have a meeting, we're going to discuss what we're going to be posting over the next two weeks. And we do also have the, like, we do choose how many will be posts, how many will be reels, how many will be carousels, how many will be stories."

As can be seen from the answers, not all organisations have a clearly defined strategic communication plan that they follow. Participant 2 organises quarterly meetings where NGO members can discuss the topic of strategic communication. Participant 5 has a two-week strategic plan, according to which the NGO posts on Instagram. From the answer of Participant 1, it can be seen that content planning for social networks takes place rather organically, depending on the situation or area where the NGO is currently active. Participant 3 uses the option of tagging collaborations and partner organisations on Instagram as part of strategic planning. Last but not least, Participant 4 considers sharing important information about refugees, where they came from, and why they came as part of their strategic communication.

Theme 4 - Measuring Data on Instagram

From a business point of view, the transition to Web 2.0 has changed how marketing is shaped to individuals and targeting (Thackeray et al., 2008). The use of social networks for non-governmental organisations is a critical point in shaping communication (Campbell et al., (2014). Measuring data on Instagram is part of gaining information about what content followers prefer. The topic "Measuring Data on Instagram" aims to examine the metrics NGOs track to improve their communication and strategies on Instagram.

Participant 1:

"So we'll look at the conversion rates, um, and, uh, comments we think are very important because we feel like when people are actually, when people are actually

really engaged in a post, then liking is, is fine. But it could also mean that the, the Instagram algorithm is rewarding it, or it's in the press, or it's just gaining some traction. But when a lot of people comment on a post, we know that people, we truly have kind of captured people."

Participant 2:

"Uh, well, depends on what's the, um, purpose of course, when it's a fundraising purpose, then, uh, the effect it has on fundraising, um, but mainly engagement, engagement, and then the overall development of the account. Yeah. We're tracking the numbers."

Participant 3:

"Uh, unfortunately we don't have, uh, so much, uh, data. Like we don't collect and analyze enough the data we have. Uh, we see, as I said before, like we see a little bit the likes, the views, uh, for videos and stuff, and the comments as well. So we see what works well and we also had like in the past, One communication agency who helped us on that and will, uh, showed us like which was better, which worked better."

Participant 4:

"But hey, we try to evaluate the success of individual campaigns and maybe even compare some statistics and trends. I will probably be able to say that I know that we definitely have. Yes, from statistics from social networks, but this is collected by colleagues. So I can't tell you about it in detail."

Participant 5:

"Okay, so we do measure the effect effectiveness based on the statistics, like the reach that we get, the engagement that we get, uh, from people. So even if a post might not be so successful, let's say, or so popular, but if It drives people to talk more about our cause, to raise awareness with their groups, their peer groups, to share and to fundraise. This is also a huge success for us."

As can be observed, Participant 1 stated that within the framework of data measurement, they mainly focus on monitoring conversion rate and interaction in comments. This focus is influenced by the fact that tracking likes can be distorted based on the Instagram algorithm. Participant 2 stated that organisations mainly monitor engagement and how their profile develops in general. For Participant 3, measuring data is challenging, and they state that the organisation does not measure data sufficiently. The organisation represented by Participant 4 collects data and monitors the development of individual campaigns. Participant 5 tracks engagement but simultaneously states that even posts without much interaction have a success factor for them as long as they help raise awareness among groups.

Theme 5 - Protocol for Instagram

The "Protocol for Instagram" part of the research focuses on investigating the rules and protocols that individual organisations have when posting content on Instagram. This topic is particularly important based on the delicacy and importance of communication with Middle Eastern refugees on Instagram. Individual NGO representatives shared the protocols they follow when sharing content on Instagram.

Participant 2

> *"To get the exposure, um, that is a challenge, um, but then also communicating in a way that is not white saviorist. Um, the fact that a lot of people like to donate, uh, to organizations like, uh, that, you know, show teary eyed children, uh, or show the white man in Africa giving a food package, uh, or showing, you know, either suffering, um, or, you know, white saviors. And you can see that pretty much everywhere that because that's very effective in terms of fundraising. "*

Participant 3

> *"Yeah. So we have, uh, guidelines for like, uh, minors. Only the minors who are with their parents can, uh, have like a, a legal representative saying that they are agreeing on their, uh, the picture of their kid to be posted. Um, but younger than that (16,17,18), we, we don't want to show pictures of kids. We also are very careful about women because we know that most of women don't want to appear in picture. And so we are very, very careful. Also, like we, um, Try to, to tell that, uh, directly to our, uh, but most of our volunteers know, and it's also in our protocols when we want to volunteer with us."*

Participant 5

> *"Yes, we have a very strict no faces policy, um, both for children and for adults. We will never post, uh, pictures of faces of children, which as you understand is*

also a bit, uh, can get a bit restrictive in what you, because it's, it's a bit restrictive because you have to, you tend to find out, you try to find alternatives."

Only 3 of the five organisations had something to say about the Instagram posting protocol. Participant 2 stated the importance of a context where the organisation does not communicate in a "white saviorist" style. With this statement, he tried to emphasise that their organisation has a protocol that avoids refugees being portrayed as desperate people who will be saved by "a white person giving them food and water in a photo." Participant 3 emphasised the importance of the protocol that protects minors and children so that their faces are not displayed on social networks. Participant 5 mentioned the no-faces policy that organisations follow when posting on Instagram.

7 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In their work, Carrasco-Polaino, Villar-Cirujano, and Martín-Cárdaba (2018) state that NGOs use visual content that evokes empathy. In their research, the authors state that NGOs usually use closeup child imagery, which is in contradiction to this thesis's findings, where research showed that NGOs follow a strict protocol. Many NGOs apply a no-face policy with restrictions on posting children. Carrasco-Polaino, Villar-Cirujano, & Martín-Cárdaba (2018) further state that NGOs pay attention to their content, including images, message selection, and emotional transmissions. This statement supports the findings of this thesis, where NGO representatives emphasized the importance of optimizing their content to increase engagement.

While supporting the importance of engagement and metrics, an essential part of Instagram is use of visual elements.

This research observed evident strategy among NGOs in the implementation of a “no face policy”, especially when sharing images of children. While essentially ethical, this approach presents challenges in visual storytelling. In their work, Rietveld et al. (2020) state that emotional visual appeals drive engagement on Instagram. No face policy of NGOs puts them in a position where they need to transfer narratives without revealing identities. In other words, NGOs need to rely on other visual elements, which, as stated in the research, NGOs find challenging.

Seeing emphasis on NGO protocols of sharing content on social media, which unique challenges they face in terms of visual storytelling and also addressing the conflicts refugees might come from, a more in-depth exploration of visual strategies employed on Instagram can provide richer insights into how these organizations navigate the platform's unique challenges and opportunities.

Essentially, the research of this thesis provides strategic insights on the importance of creating ethical communication on protocols while optimizing content and growing understanding of data tracking on Instagram that supports perception and different focus on the success of NGO's Instagram posts.

7.1 Thematic findings

This section contains the thematic findings obtained from interviews with NGO representatives that the author was conducting from May 2023 to August 2023. The key themes the author included in the findings pointed to the importance of engagement metrics, challenges in data measurement, diverse views on success, and the formulation of ethical communication protocols.

The main thematic findings are:

Engagement and Metrics

From the thematic analysis, participants from several organizations emphasized the importance of tracking engagement metrics on Instagram. Participants track comments, likes, and shares. In some situations, they also focus on the click-through rate. Engagement is crucial to an organization's effectiveness and success on social media. It is possible to state that organizations are actively monitoring and optimizing their content for audience interaction. In this thesis, Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 5 all named reach, comments, and engagement essential metrics for analysing their strategy and activities. This aligns with the work of Michopoulou & Moisa (2019), where authors state that metrics such as responses, likes, and comments are an essential part of the evaluation process of social media strategies.

Challenges and Data Measurement

Some organizations may see data measurement as a challenge from the obtained and processed data. Some organizations need help gathering and analysing extensive data. Organizations need to make improvements to their social media strategies in this area if they want to get more online visibility and insights. The difficulties that participants of this research named highlight a need for tools to support data analysis, which was also called in a previous study by Alsaeed et al. (2019).

Perception of Success

The post's popularity is not a success metric for non-governmental organizations dedicated to refugees. Many of these organizations consider their contributions successful when they can raise awareness, engage peer groups, and drive fundraising efforts. Such an idea of success indicates that some organizations are focused on long-term impact and advocacy rather than just immediate engagement. The shift in success metrics—from post popularity to impact on awareness and advocacy (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 5)—mirrors the findings of Shim (2014), suggesting a move towards more impact-driven social media strategies among NGOs.

Ethical Communication and Protocols

Thematic analysis brings findings that organizations are aware of the ethical and sensitive nature of their content when communicating about refugee-related issues on Instagram. They have established procedures to guarantee civil and responsible communication while preserving the dignity and privacy of the people they assist. Several organizations have stated rules such as the no-face policy alibi prohibiting the depiction of children on Instagram posts. The cohesion of ethical communication protocols, such as the 'no-face' policy for children, indicates a profound shift towards more responsible and respectful content creation (Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5). This resonates with the increased ethical considerations in respecting privacy and understanding anonymity on social media (McKee, 2013).

7.2 Conclusion

The main goal of this master's thesis was to examine non-governmental organisations' communication on Instagram on the topic of refugees from close-knit communities. Based on the processed data, it can be concluded that the communication of NGOs on Instagram is multi-layered. In this section, the author concludes the findings of the research thesis.

Organisations know the importance of tracking data and engagement, such as tracking likes, comments, and shares. Instagram posts about refugees and migration cover various subjects, such as facts, updates, and personal narratives. This flexibility is beneficial for NGOs, as it was mentioned during the interviews that NGOs have to adapt their music to the algorithm on Instagram. To engage followers, it is necessary to use visual elements such as photos, images, graphics, and visualised data. By applying visual elements, it is possible to share the key message of the post better. Hashtags and keywords are used strategically among organisations to help classify content and improve discoverability.

The thematic analysis also shows that organisations commit to ethical communication. Individual participants and the examined contributions avoid using harmful stereotypes, adopting responsible communication styles that respectfully present refugees.

This research sheds light on the current communication state on Instagram; it is essential to acknowledge its limitations and constraints, including sample size, scope, elimination, and sampling bias. However, these limitations bring opportunities for future research.

7.3 Limitations and Constraints

Part of the ethical behaviour of the researcher is to truthfully state any limitations that were discovered during the research (Hair Jr et al., 2019, p. 478). In this section, the author of this thesis has determined several possible limitations that need to be addressed.

Sample Size

From the beginning of the writing process, the author firmly determined that the representatives who will be part of the data sample must be participants closely connected to the non-governmental sector and work with refugees from the Middle East. The participants are thus a suitable sample from the point of view of experience within the non-governmental sector. On the other hand, the size of this work and research did not require an extensive sample size. This is one of the limits of this thesis. The sample size of this research is five representatives from European NGOs that deal with the topic of refugees and work with refugees from the Middle East. It is also important to mention that not all participants actively manage social networks in their organisations. The answers to some questions needed to be more comprehensive.

Scope and Delimitations

This master's thesis was the author's first encounter with the topic of refugees from the Middle East and communication on this topic on Instagram. Therefore, the author worked primarily to determine the relevant topics for this research. The literature of this work thus deals with areas such as the development of non-governmental organisations, the development of the situation in MENA countries, crisis and strategic communications. The content of this master's thesis was not to investigate the communication and marketing strategies of individual non-governmental organisations in depth but to open up this question and examine its validity.

Sampling Bias

Many NGOs in Europe deal with refugees. From the point of view of the research, sampling biases could occur for organisations whose members do not speak English. The author collected data samples from all over Europe. Therefore, the language of this research and interviews was English, which was not the mother tongue of the four representatives from the research sample.

7.4 Future Research Opportunities

As mentioned, these rights are primarily a foundation for future research. The research posed an initial question to NGOs about how they communicate on Instagram on the topic of refugees from the Middle East.

From the point of view of future possible research, the author sees an opportunity to explore in depth the ethical protocols of NGOs from the point of view of digital marketing.

For research possibilities, it would be exciting and equally beneficial to study Cross-Cultural Studies where the researcher would observe how individual NGOs have to adapt their communication strategies in uniform cultural contexts. In the same spirit, there will subsequently be an opportunity to examine the local communication of smaller non-governmental organisations versus international NGOs with a more significant reach and size.

This future research can expand the knowledge field that will also benefit NGO leaders and their management of communication on social platforms.

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APPENDIX 1: Interview Protocol for Participants

NGO Communication on Refugees from Middle East		
NGO's during 2015 refugee crisis	How did your organization strategize and tailor its communication specifically on the refugee crisis through Instagram?	
Roles of NGOs in the refugee crisis	What was the role of Instagram as a channel that advocates for refugees?	
The genesis of the Middle East refugee crisis	How does your organization perceive the role of educating followers on the challenges faced by Middle Eastern refugees?	
2015 refugee crisis	How does your organization address the challenges of refugees when on the move?	
Safe havens and refugee camps	What was the main challenge when communicating about safe havens and refugee camps on Instagram?	
Racism and public response to the refugee crisis	How did your organization respond to the refugee crisis, including the rise of racism and discrimination?	How did this affect your communication on social media, mainly Instagram?
Positive experience with refugees from the Middle East	What kind of reactions or responses did your organization observe when sharing posts about refugees on Instagram?	Can you name them? How did this affect your communication strategy on IG?

Crisis communication	How did you manage your crisis communication in response to the public's response to the refugee crisis?	
Social media and crisis communication	How do you effectively manage your social media during crisis communication and communicate effectively with stakeholders?	What is the procedure when checking and managing relationships with stakeholders on Instagram?
Crisis communication and NGOs	How did your organization incorporate crisis communication strategies specifically into its use of Instagram?	
Strategic Communication	Can you describe your strategic communication plan that you use to support the refugee crisis on Instagram?	
Strategic Communication for NGOs	How does your organization plan strategic communication to raise awareness about refugee contexts?	
Integrating Digital Communication Strategies into NGO Communication Efforts	What is the way of measurement of the effectiveness of communication on Instagram?	
NGO communication on social media	What are the successful Instagram campaigns of your organization that focus on the refugee crisis?	Why do you see them successful?
Challenges of NGOs using social media	What are the challenges that your organizations face when using Instagram to communicate on the topic of refugees?	What is your posting plan and how do you keep up with the goals you have for your Instagram?

Final question	How would you manage your Instagram account now, when you have had the experience of the refugee crisis?	Is there anything you would do differently?