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# **The prevalence and durability of emotional enthusiasm: connective action and charismatic authority in the 2015 European refugee crisis**

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## **Abstract**

Departing from previous research on digital action networks, this paper approaches the spread and emotional contagion of digital activism slightly differently, looking for it not necessarily inside the social movement itself, but rather outside it. By questioning the implicit assumption that the spread and emotional contagion of digital activism is contained only in the context of social movements, we explore emotional enthusiasm also in the social media engagement of other types of contemporaneous civil society organizations, viewing it as a manifestation of Weber's concept of charismatic authority. Empirically, we study voluntary engagement and mobilization on Facebook in Sweden during the refugee crisis of the fall of 2015. In a mixed-method content analysis of 59 Facebook groups and pages, we trace the use of emotional markers in posts during the period September-November 2015. Our findings indicate that the prevalence of emotional enthusiasm outside of social movement, and the lack of durability of it both in organizations and in networks, points to the lack of stability that charismatic authority entails. As charismatic authority becomes institutionalized as a legitimate and predominant manner of organizing through social media, this may have large scale implications for societal organizing at large. The paper indicates that emotional enthusiasm in the form of charismatic authority not only provides democratic opportunities for protest and contention, but, given its emotional contagion, may also but democratic procedures and respect for bureaucratic structures at risk.

## **Introduction**

As digital activism becomes more prevalent, a bulk of studies has developed on the potential scope of such engagement (cf. Loader 2007; Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Joyce 2010; Earl & Kimport, 2011; Bode, 2012; Gustafsson 2013; Tufekci 2013; Gerbaudo 2017). Much of the literature on social media protests points to the spread that sharing practices bring about, and others emphasize the emotional contagion that such activism entails. However, little research has been made extracting the particularities of such engagement and examining its potential spread to other civil society organizations.

In this paper, we approach previous research on the spread and emotional contagion of digital activism slightly differently, looking for it not necessarily inside the social movement itself, but rather outside it. By questioning the implicit assumption that the spread and emotional contagion of digital activism is contained only in the context of social movements, we explore emotional enthusiasm also in the social media engagement of other types of contemporaneous civil society organizations.

We do so by studying the case of voluntary engagement and mobilization on Facebook in Sweden during the refugee crisis. In a mixed-method content analysis of 59 Facebook groups and pages that served as focal points for coordination and opinion making, we trace the use of emotional markers in posts during the period September-November 2015.

By conceptualizing the emotional enthusiasm and the spread of social media activism as a contemporary variety of charismatic authority (Weber 1978), the aim of this paper is to explore such authority in social media interactions. Our research question is thus: *when comparing social movements and their contemporaneous civil society organizations, what is the prevalence and durability of emotional enthusiasm?*

## **Theoretical framework**

In their seminal article and accompanying book, Bennett & Segerberg (2012; 2013) examine “the organizational dynamics that emerge when communication becomes a prominent part of organizational structure” (2012: 739). In this statement lies the presumption that social and other digital media platforms can enable movements that are qualitatively different (in that they do not require participants to share a common identity or vision) than previous forms of collective action. The impetus for this idea stemmed from an observation of the remarkable events of 2011,

when digital communication platforms allowed millions of individuals to very quickly organize a flurry of social and political protests around the world: the Indignados in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in the USA, the events grouped under “the Arab Spring”, and so on.

According to Bennett & Segerberg, “digitally enabled action networks” are either coordinated by established advocacy organizations, or arise spontaneously, entailing “technology platforms and applications taking the role of established political organizations” (2012: 742). In the former case, this is just a case of established organizations working according to the logic of collective action using digital communication technology. In the latter case, “personalized action frames”, where individuals can buy into, customize, and share “frames” or “memes” like “We are the 99 percent” in the case of the OWS movement, or “Refugees Welcome” in the case of the 2015 refugee crisis, replace collective action frames defined by organizations. They connect this development with a long trend of individualization in post-industrial democracies, where various types of organization membership and loyalty to collectives have been steadily going down for the past 40-50 years (cf. Inglehart 1977). Instead of channeling voluntarist yearnings through hierarchical organizations with a huge ideological and/or organizational baggage, new generations naturally choose to engage in a more flexible way, where their individualism is preserved. “People may still join actions in large numbers, but the identity reference is more derived through inclusive and diverse large-scale personal expression rather than through common group or ideological identification” (Bennett & Segerberg 2012: 744).

The logic of connective action, it is claimed, takes away the problem of free-riding because free-riders can join the movement in an easier and more rewarding way: “participation becomes self-motivating as personally expressive content is shared with, and recognized by, other who, in turn, repeat these networked sharing activities” (ibid: 752). The idea of connective action bears resemblance to the tradition of techno-utopianism ideologically colored by libertarianism, which has been a companion of public and scholarly debate on the internet, digital media, social media, and their effects on the organization of human affairs. When technological thresholds for information exchange and coordination are lowered, individuals are allowed to “self-organize and develop their individuality” (Vinken 2007: 51). Users can together create a “collective intelligence” as a cooperative collective (Levy 1997: 13) or a “wisdom of the crowds” as an aggregate of individuals (Surowiecki 2004). Through the network logic they can “organize without organizations” (Shirky 2008) and form “smart mobs” (Rheingold 2002), thought to be coordinated groups with common goals acting in a more cohesive fashion than “traditional”

mobs. The platforms themselves replace the organization (links, event calendars, likes, shares, etc. is enough to keep the movement going) and simultaneously fulfils the emotional needs of the individuals. In other words, the connective action abandons the principles of a bureaucratic organization and replaces it with another type of organizational imperative, which is appreciated and sought after by the individuals who join. We argue that this new imperative may be labelled charismatic, and that its individuality also posits the existence of emotional enthusiasm (Gerbaudo 2016).

According to Weber, charisma “arises from collective excitement produced by extraordinary events and from surrender to heroism of any kind” (1978: 1121) and that the power of charisma rests “upon the belief in revelation and heroes” (ibid: 1116). In the context of digital activism, charismatic authority can be interpreted as emotional enthusiasm, which is a newly minted concept defined as “intense occasions of online interaction in which the emotions of thousands of Web users fuse into a collective sense of possibility” (Gerbaudo 2016: 256). When Weber wrote his foundational work on authority, he contrasted the modern phenomenon of bureaucratic authority with that of traditional and charismatic authority. Whereas bureaucratic authority adheres to rationalized modern tenets such as specified rules, spheres of competence, systematic division of powers and sanctions, the other types did not. Traditional authority derives from hereditary claims to power, whereas charismatic authority is based on the specific charismatic traits of the charismatic leader, as defined and recognized by his followers. Charismatic authority exists when it is understood as such in the eyes of its adherents. “What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his ‘followers’ or ‘disciples’” (Weber 1978: 242). For the purposes of this paper, we do not mean that emotional enthusiasm implies the existence of *one* specific charismatic leader, who stands as an ideal type at the core of Weber’s idea of charismatic authority. Instead, we mean that this authority can become inherent in the form of engagement itself, in the very surge of activism and emotional enthusiasm that participation in social media entails. In the words of Weber, “An organized group subject to charismatic authority will be called a charismatic community (...) It is based on an emotional form of communal relationship”. (ibid: 243) Here, we understand networks organized through social media, and thus connective action, as charismatic communities. By using personalized action frames, the personal engagement renders a role of charismatic subject/follower to the individual activists, and that following is to the mass movement itself, rather than to an assigned leader. In this, emotional enthusiasm replaces the

singular leader with the charismatic authority over the movement, where individuals coalesce in the utopian virtues enabled by contemporary technological platforms.

Research on social movements and emotions dates more than two decades back, and focuses on the specific emotions of the participants and how those emotions are relevant for their social movement engagement (Jasper 2011). In this paper, we approach emotional engagement slightly differently. Rather than limiting the emotional impetus related to digital social movement engagement per se (cf. Gerbaudo 2016; Poell et al 2016), we examine the spread of emotional enthusiasm, in the form of positively charged words, as a colloquial means of civil society organizing on social media at large. We thus widen our examination of the potential prevalence of emotional enthusiasm to other forms of civil society organizations, rather than focusing specifically on social protest. We thereby build on recent work that has incorporated research on emotional contagion to also relate to digital action networks (Gerbaudo 2016). Emotional contagion may be defined as “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes” (Schoenewolf, 1990: 50, cited in Barsade 2002: 646). Here, we focus on behavioral attitudes rather than emotional states, studying the spread of verbal usage of emotional words in a digital engagement. We also move from looking at this engagement within groups (Guillory et al 2011) or solely in social movements (Gerbaudo 2016; Poell 2016), and instead study emotional contagion between groups. This is relevant given the fact that if emotional contagion exists within groups on social media, it may potentially also spread outside of these groups, as the very feature that makes social media engagement multiply so quickly is precisely its spreading capacity (Bennett & Segerberg 2012). *This motivates the study of the prevalence of emotional enthusiasm on social media at large, and not only in social movements.*

However, if emotional enthusiasm, in the form of charismatic authority, is also spread to other civil society organizations through emotional contagion, this may be problematic for those groups. Weber described challenges for organizing based on charismatic authority, primarily related to its durability, eventually leading to the transformation or demise of charismatic authority as the engagement of the followers diminishes. “It is only in the initial stages and so long as the charismatic leader acts in a way that is completely outside everyday social organization, that it is possible for his followers to live communistically in a community of faith and enthusiasm”. (Weber 1978: 249). According to him “Every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation

under the weight of material interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to its end.” (ibid: 1120). In addition, charismatic authority rests on notions of selflessness and lack of economic gain, almost a type of altruism in the name of the charismatic cause, and Weber meant that this was not sustainable. “It is the fate of charisma to recede before the powers of tradition or of rational association after it has entered the permanent structures of social action. The waning charisma generally indicated the diminishing importance of individual action.” (ibid: 1148-1149) In sum, charismatic authority, according to Weber, is inherently unstable and essentially short-term, and in this, it is similar to Gerbaudo’s (2016) emotional enthusiasm and its evanescence. Thus, if the charismatic authority, as an effect of emotional contagion, spreads to other civil society organizations, this may put their more bureaucratized organization structures at risk. *This motivates the study of the durability of charismatic authority in social media engagement.*

### **Research Design, Data and Methods**

Empirically, this paper concerns the fall of 2015, and focuses on Swedish civil society organizing in the refugee reception. From early September until November 2015 (when the Swedish border was essentially shut; subsequently, Swedish refugee policy was essentially reversed), a large number of refugees arrived in Sweden, some parts of the fall seeing several thousands of refugees entering into Sweden each week. In total, about 163 000 refugees sought asylum in Sweden in 2015, which was twice the number of the previous year, and an unknown number of non-registered so-called transit refugees also travelled through Sweden en route to Norway or Finland. The events of the fall of 2015 was commonly called the “refugee crisis”, referring both to the fact that a number of long-ranging wars in countries such as Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan made many people leave their home countries, but also to the fact that the unexpected arrival of the sheer volume of refugees in Sweden put a strain on the local public administration; in this sense, the refugee crisis was also being viewed as an administrative crisis. In addition, the term refugee crisis referred to the anger and contention of the European Union’s carrier liability policy that forced refugees to embark upon dangerous journeys to Europe to seek asylum, as well as the Dublin Convention, which forced them to seek asylum in their first country of arrival, although these countries did not provide what was considered a dignified reception. The political contention coupled with this crisis concerned all of these interpretations of why this was a crisis, but we will here use the word refugee crisis to denote the specific events taking place in Sweden in the fall of 2015. In addition, we will relate to contentious politics in the limited sense of challenging the Swedish state and its manner of handling the crisis at hand.

The fall of 2015 saw the quick rise of spontaneous voluntary initiatives organized through ad-hoc or existing Facebook groups and pages complemented and sometimes frustrated more traditional efforts by civil society organizations. Differing strategies in different groups, the use of certain tropes and symbolic uses of expressive and emotional language to mobilize and create cohesion among participants (the *Refugees Welcome* action frame, among others), the boom-and-bust cycle of engagement, posting comments as an outlet for the silent despair of onlookers – it all actualizes and provides a ground for critique of several popular strands of recent theorizing around civic engagement in a hybrid media era (cf Chadwick 2013), as well as an inquiry in the differences between self-organizing networks and traditional civil society organizations and their potential societal effects.

**[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]**

We identified an initial sample of 85 groups, events, and pages on Facebook that in various ways served as focal points for voluntary engagement during the refugee crisis in 2015 in Sweden (see Table 1). Some of these groups can be categorized as digital action networks, whereas others were simply contemporaneous civil society organizations, some focused on the refugees, and some not. We classified the organizations/networks drawing on Bennett & Segerberg's (2012; 2013) three ideal types of "large scale action networks": organizationally brokered networks, organizationally enabled networks, and self-organizing networks. However, our sample is no perfect match to the Bennett & Segerberg trichotomy, as a core feature of Bennett & Segerberg's definition is the focus on contentious politics. The Facebook groups and pages related to the established organizations in our sample do not completely align with this part of the definition. These organizations were selected as their mandate related somehow to the refugees, but they were not engaged specifically in contentious politics in relation to the Swedish state. It is precisely this difference that also validates the relevance of our study. If charismatic authority, through emotional contagion, does spread to organizations that exist and act outside the scope of a wider social movement, this is an important aspect of emotional enthusiasm for civil society at large. Thus, we distance ourselves slightly from the original definitions by choosing categories that depart from the organizational origins of the groups/pages. Below, the definitions by Bennett & Segerberg are complemented by our definitions.



- Organizationally brokered networks are networks set up and used by existing organizations. Social media is used for mobilizing and management rather than for self-organizing. *In our study, pages and groups administrated by established organizations are called simply “organizations” and are considered as such.*
- The self-organizing networks are basically non-organizations formed around the technological platform characterized by a high degree of personalized engagement. *In our study, pages and groups that started out as networks are called simply “networks”.*
- The organizationally enabled networks constitute a hybrid form where existing organizations may be involved, but kind of give up control to self-organizing individuals. This might be a way for organizations to capitalize on those who feel the urge to participate but who do not want to become engaged in a formal organization. *In our study, pages and groups that are networks that were started by established organizations are called “networks built on organizations”.*

Our data collection proceeded along two parallel routes. All posts from the 85 groups were manually saved as pdf files. Simultaneously, posts from the pages and groups were also gathered using the Netvizz application (Rieder 2013). Data gathering took place throughout the fall, ending in December, 2015 and does not reflect subsequent changes to the posts. Due to the limitations of the Netvizz application and the Facebook API at the time, only data from open groups and pages could be gathered. There were also a number of groups and pages that, upon closer inspection, did not contain posts pertaining to the refugee crisis. The final sample contained 59 groups and pages and 8074 posts. The data set was imported into software for statistical analysis. After an initial overview of the data, we decided to manually code a limited number of Facebook groups in order to capture the charismatic element of emotional enthusiasm. We focused our investigation on positive words of love and heroism (Gerbaudo 2016), used in a colloquial manner in the digital action networks, i.e. in those initiatives that we labelled as *networks*. A specific list of words was generated by qualitatively examining two such groups *We are doing what we can* [Vi gör vad vi kan] and *Refugees Welcome to Malmö*. A list of 11 word stems (ie including variations and inflections) was generated from this qualitative work (see table 2), and these words were then tested quantitatively in all 59 groups and pages. It should be noted that the posts containing these word stems were screened for context, whereas posts NOT containing the word stems were not screened for context, probably resulting in more false negatives than false positives. What we witnessed here was the systematic usage of words of love and heroism, becoming part of the colloquial vocabulary of these organizations. Groups and

pages were coded as either being *organizations* (ie groups and pages administrated by established organizations); *networks* (ie groups and pages set up as ad-hoc networks); and *networks based on organizations* (ie groups and pages set up as ad-hoc networks BY established organizations).

## [TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

### Results

As stated above, the sample included 59 Facebook groups and pages. They ranged in number of membership/users from about 200 to about 277 000 (UNICEF Sweden). Of these, 48 were Facebook pages and 11 were Facebook groups. During the time period under study, the groups and pages and their users published a total of 8074 posts.

The most common type of post was a status update (49% of posts) with photos and links at around 20% each and events and videos around 5% each. 40 groups and pages fell into the category of *organizations*, whereas 15 were coded as *networks*, and only 5 as *networks based on organizations*. However, whereas the large majority of groups and pages were administrated by *organizations*, as well as having generally higher membership numbers, the *networks* published substantially more posts. During the time period under study, 1 September - 30 November 2015, the 40 groups and pages administrated by *organizations*, with an average membership number of 20 422, posted 3202 posts, while the *networks*, with an average membership of 5356, posted 4103 posts. The 5 groups and pages coded as *networks based on organizations* had an average membership of 3970 and posted 769 posts.

The number of posts cannot be seen as an indication of total activity. One reason for this might be that the *networks* relied almost completely on the Facebook groups and pages for coordination, while the *organizations* to a larger extent had other means, including employees, mailing lists etc. at their convenience. This study does not take into account any other form of communication, including other social media services. Probably, there is a relationship between activity and posts for the networks, but the development over the course of the autumn in 2015 could potentially mean that activity was steady, but increasing bureaucratization meant that other forms of coordination took precedence over Facebook. There is, however, no indication of this in the material.

The larger membership numbers for the *organizations* was also translated into a difference in the engagement rate for posts (the engagement for a post is measured as the sum of likes, comments, and shares). Whereas the posts of the *organizations* had an average engagement rate of 238, the *network* posts had an average engagement rate of only 53 and *networks based on organizations* had an average engagement rate of 85. It should be remembered that engagement rates for posts roughly follows a power law distribution with a small number of posts attracting a very high engagement rate, whereas most posts have an engagement rate of 0 or 1.

**[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]**

There were, however, also differences between *organizations*, *networks* and *networks based on organizations* considering the intensity of posting during the time period under study. As can be seen from Figure 1, the *networks* published a very high number of posts in early September with one peak on 5-6 September, with above 200 posts in a single day, and another peak on 9 September, with over 300 posts in a single day. The *organizations* and their users also had peaks of activity in early September, but on a much lower level. Early September saw the publication of the picture of Alan Kurdi (2 September). The peak on 5 September also coincides with a pro-refugee weekend rally held in Stockholm, when the prime minister Stefan Löfven famously said that “My Europe does not build walls”, defending the at the time generous Swedish refugee policy. After a very high intensity, the number of posts drops sharply at the end of September and then stabilizes at a level around 30-50 posts per day. The number of posts per day for the established organizations also drops, but from a lower level, and also stabilizes around the 30-50 posts per day bracket. The *networks based on organizations*, being a much smaller category, see a peak in September but generally remain on a stable level throughout the period.

These findings might be taken as an indication that the general level of interest and activity in the *networks* followed a boom and bust cycle that has been observed repeatedly in the literature on online activism, although any interpretations must be cautious.

In order to look for instances of emotional enthusiasm and the use of positive emotions as a mobilizing and cohesive factor as well as an indicator of charismatic authority, posts were coded

for enthusiasm using 10 word stems and the heart emoji as described in the methods section (see also Table 2). An example of a post coded as enthusiastic can be seen in Figure 2. Here, the administrators of *network* *Pay it forward* publishes a number of photos and an accompanying text describing an initiative collecting clothes in a small town in Western Sweden in cooperation with the local football club. The images show smiling people collecting and sorting the clothes, as well as some of the volunteers who helped transport the clothes to a larger city nearby. The tone in the post is very positive and enthusiastic, expressing gratitude to all involved in the action, using many “enthusiastic” words: one heart emoji, two “wonderful”, and two “fantastic”, as well as a hashtag, #äLSKadinnästa, which is a word play on the abbreviation of the football club, LSK, and the biblical phrase “love thy neighbor”. The post generates 85 likes and 4 shares, but no comments. It can be argued that the function of this post is to use positive language in order to keep the members/users of the *network* in an enthusiastic mood, thus prolonging the sentiment that is the main driver of action in the network. Additional examples can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Figure 4 is interesting because this post uses the same kind of enthusiastic language as we can see in the *networks*, but it is posted by an administrator of the page of an established organization: the UN-affiliated Swedish branch of UNICEF.

**[FIGURE 2, 3 and 4 ABOUT HERE]**

If the *networks* are more dependent than the *organizations* on the use of charismatic authority, i.e. constantly engaging members/users by the application of enthusiastic language, it can be hypothesized that *networks* should on average be characterized to a higher extent by the use of enthusiastic language than established *organizations* who can depend on other forms of authority. But our analysis shows that there are no major differences between different organizational types. Of the 8074 Facebook posts in this study, 7055, or 87%, were coded as non-enthusiastic and 1019, or 13% as enthusiastic. Out of the posts from the *organizations*, 13% were enthusiastic, whereas the rate of enthusiastic posts is actually somewhat smaller for the *networks*: a mere 12% of the posts were coded as enthusiastic. For the *networks based on organizations*, the share of enthusiastic posts is 14%. As can be expected, the difference is not statistically significant. The use of enthusiastic language seems to be as important for *organizations* as for *networks* and *networks based on organizations*.

There are large idiosyncratic differences between individual groups and pages. As can be seen from table 2, the share of enthusiastic posts varies between 0% (Refugee Air and Refugees Welcome #Fryshuset) and 33% (Läkare i världen/Medecins du Monde). But on the whole, there is no clear pattern.

If one goal is to engage people in your posts, using enthusiastic language seems like a good way of achieving this. Enthusiastic posts generated on average substantially more engagement than non-enthusiastic posts. Non-enthusiastic posts in the sample have a mean engagement rate of 103, while the enthusiastic posts have a mean engagement rate of 310. Taking into account the differences between organizational types, the non-enthusiastic and enthusiastic posts, respectively, have engagement rates of 191 and 540 for *organizations* and 41 and 141 for *networks*, and 75 and 178 for *networks based on organizations*. On average, a post using enthusiastic language will, on average, get three times more engagement than a post that does not use enthusiastic language.

The frequency of enthusiastic posts over the time period under study follows roughly the general development. Figure 5 shows the number of enthusiastic posts per day among *organizations*, *networks*, and *networks based on organizations*, with a high intensity of enthusiastic posts in early September and a sharp drop at the end of the month with subsequent stabilization on a lower level.

**[FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE]**

When taking the *share* of enthusiastic posts, the impression is somewhat different. As is evident from Figure 6, the share of enthusiastic posts remains on a relatively constant level during the autumn, although with large differences from day to day. This can be an indication of the continuing usefulness of enthusiasm in engaging users/members.

**[FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE]**

## Concluding discussion

Our findings point to two central observations in relation to the prevalence and enthusiasm of charismatic authority outside of social movements. Firstly, in terms of prevalence, there seems to exist an emotional contagion effect where charismatic authority spreads beyond the social movement itself both to networks based on organizations, but more importantly also to organizations that are not specifically engaged in the social movement. This finding is important as it indicates that the phenomenon of emotional enthusiasm has the potential to alter the organizational dynamics also of contemporaneous civil society organizations not focused on contentious politics, which in turn may challenge the stability and strength of their organizational, bureaucratic, structures. This is especially relevant with regards to the second observation in our findings, namely that the durability of charismatic authority is short lived, and the evanescence of emotional enthusiasm may apply not only to social movements but also to established civil society organizations.

The prevalence of emotional enthusiasm outside of social movements, and the lack of durability of it both in organizations and in networks, points to the lack of stability that charismatic authority entails. For Weber, the transformation of charisma into established organizational forms contains the seeds leading to its transformation and in a sense also its demise: “When the tide that lifted a charismatically led group out of everyday life flows back into the channels of workday routines, at the least the ‘pure’ form of charismatic domination will wane and turn into an ‘institution’ ( ... ) In this case it is often transformed beyond recognition, and identifiable only on an analytical level. Thus the pure type of charismatic rulership is in a very specific sense unstable”. (1978: 1121) The instability of charismatic authority, is, in Weber’s understanding, also relevant in relation to other forms of authority: “in its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only *in statu nascendi*. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized or a combination of both.” (ibid: 246) For the charismatic authority is only sustainable as long as activists feel rewarded rather than drained/punished/used by the movement. With time, importance of personal engagement vanes, and so does its charismatic quality.

However, differing from Weber’s observations that charismatic authority will transform into either bureaucratic or traditional authority, we suggest that the charismatic authority brought about by emotional enthusiasm may instead challenge bureaucratic organizing in its entirety. If, in fact, the way to bring about large scale digital engagement is through charismatic authority, and if

its emotional enthusiasm becomes institutionalized as the predominant legitimate manner to organize, this may challenge previous ideas on what it means to be a legitimate organization. Here we argue that in contrast to most contemporary organizational research arguing for the ever proliferating bureaucratic organizing of society (Bromley and Meyer, 2015; Meyer and Bromley, 2013; Power 1999), the advent and especially the large scale proliferation of networks organized through social media entails the spread of charismatic authority as an organizational imperative for large scale organizing of individuals. If, as our findings indicate, charismatic authority becomes institutionalized as a legitimate and predominant manner of organizing through social media, this has large scale implications for societal organizing at large, which is becoming increasingly digitalized. Seen from this perspective, emotional enthusiasm not only provides democratic opportunities for protest and contention (Bennett & Sergerberg 2013). Instead, its very evanescence (Gerbaudo 2016), and given its emotional contagion (Barsade 2002), may also put democratic procedures and respect for bureaucratic structures at risk. In their long-term panel study of the political socialization of Swedish youth, Amnå & Ekman (2014) found that many potential activists were “standby citizens”: interested and engaged, but remaining passive until a window of opportunity or a catalyzing event in society turns them into activists. But for how long? The problem is not that a group of people are only active or attentive to societal affairs during limited periods of time; the danger lies in whether the lure of connective action and the massive scope and energy that can be amassed for short periods of time; moments of enthusiasm, becomes the dominating way of organizing voluntarism in democratic societies. Our findings are limited to the spread of emotional enthusiasm to established civil society organizations, but indicate the weight of studying the spread of this behavior also to other parts of society, perhaps most importantly public administration and political parties.

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## Figures and tables

Name of group/page	Organizational type	Comparative classification	Posts September- November 2015	Share of enthusiastic posts, %	Members 9 December 2015	Group/page
ABF Stockholm	Organization	Adult educational association	60	15,00%	8324	page
Al tadamon	Network	Refugee focused network	648	21,00%	3094	group
Amnesty International Sverige	Organization	Aid agency	85	4,70%	78 175	page
Asylgruppen i Malmö	Organization	Refugee focused organization	30	10,00%	2178	page
Allt åt alla Malmö	Organization	Left wing organization	182	21,10%	5384	page
Allt åt alla Göteborg	Organization	Left wing organization	57	15,80%	2291	page
Allt åt alla Stockholm	Organization	Left wing organization	119	7,60%	4612	page
Ensamkommande Flyktingbarn	Network	Refugee focused network	167	6,60%	5623	page
Ensamkommandes förbund	Organization	Refugee focused organization	65	10,80%	4693	page
FARR (Flyktinggruppernas och Asylkommittéernas Riksråd)	Organization	Refugee focused organization	106	6,60%	3161	page
Flyktinghjälp i Västerleds församling	Network based on organization	Religious organization	72	15,30%	940	page
Flyktingvolontärer Botkyrka	Network	Refugee focused organization	144	16,70%	2716	page
Svenska FN-förbundet	Organization	Refugee focused network	111	6,30%	9580	page
Frälsningsarméns Sociala Center, Hornstull	Organization	Religious organization	20	10,00%	472	page
Frälsningsarmén	Organization	Religious organization	77	10,40%	8235	page
Frälsningsarmén Malmö	Organization	Religious organization	29	13,80%	219	page
Göteborgs Moské	Organization	Religious organization	72	1,40%	6035	page
GUM(Göteborgs Unga Muslimer)	Organization	Religious organization	104	7,70%	2417	page
Hjälp oss att hjälpa i Ungern	Network	Refugee focused network	289	9,70%	1911	group
IM Stockholm - Individuell Människohjälp	Organization	Aid agency	91	8,80%	1002	page
Immanuelskyrkan Stockholm	Organization	Religious organization	137	15,30%	930	page
Ingen Människa är Illegal Stockholm	Organization	Left wing organization	56	8,90%	6138	page
Ingen Människa är Illegal	Organization	Left wing organization	169	13,00%	17 939	group
Ingen Människa är Illegal Göteborg	Organization	Left wing organization	49	2,00%	2387	page
Insamling till flyktingarna i Budapest	Network	Refugee focused network	32	31,30%	2002	group

IOGT-NTO	Organization	Temperance movement organization	91	6,60%	6508 page
IOGT-NTOs flyktngakut	Network based on organization	Temperance movement organization	109	19,30%	589 page
Islamic Relief Sverige	Organization	Religious organization	95	26,30%	8913 page
Katarina församling	Organization	Religious organization	108	10,20%	3436 page
Kontrapunkt	Network based on organization	Left wing organization	463	13,60%	15848 page
Lundby församlings Flyktinghjälp	Network based on organization	Religious organization	125	8,80%	1392 page
Läkare i världen (Médecins du Monde Sweden)	Organization	International organization	24	33,30%	3328 page
Medmänsklighet	Network	Refugee focused network	301	7,00%	5171 group
Malmö's Unga Muslimer	Organization	Religious organization	50	22,00%	1716 page
Nykterhetsrörelsens Bildningsverksamhet (NBV)	Organization	Temperance movement organization	42	16,70%	1118 page
Pay it forward	Network	Refugee focused network	112	11,60%	5107 page
Redbergskyrkans Flyktinghjälp	Network based on organization	Religious organization	64	15,60%	1083 page
Refugee Air	Network	Refugee focused network	50	0,00%	2298 group
Refugees Welcome #Fryshuset	Network	Refugee focused network	21	0,00%	5122 group
Refugees welcome to Gothenburg	Network	Refugee focused network	31	22,60%	10860 group
Refugees welcome to Malmö	Network	Refugee focused network	877	10,80%	9983 group
REFUGEES WELCOME TO SWEDEN	Network	Refugee focused network	527	6,60%	2759 group
Svenska Röda Korset	Organization	Aid agency	64	6,60%	120470 page
Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund Stockholm Nord	Organization	Aid agency	4	25,00%	285 page
Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund Göteborg	Organization	International organization	17	29,40%	693 page
Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund Malmö	Organization	Aid agency	21	19,00%	846 page
Röda Korsets Ungdomsförbund Stockholm Syd	Organization	Aid agency	14	28,60%	481 page
Rädda Barnen	Organization	Aid agency	192	16,70%	116768 page
SOS Barnbyar	Organization	Aid agency	88	21,60%	38760 page
Göteborgs Stadsmission	Organization	Religious organization	69	18,80%	7365 page
Stockholms Stadsmission	Organization	Religious organization	84	8,30%	15651 page

Stockholms Unga Muslimer	Organization	Religious organization	76	9,20%	3910 page
Sverige för UNHCR	Organization	Aid agency	247	17,80%	39130 page
TAMAM	Organization	Religious organization	28	7,10%	2858 page
UNICEF Sverige	Organization	Aid agency	146	21,90%	276577 page
Vi Gör Vad Vi Kan - Insamling till flyktingarna i Lesbos	Network	Refugee focused network	437	17,20%	18186 page
Vita Båtarna Sverige _ White Ships Sweden	Network	Refugee focused network	44	6,80%	1453 page
Volontärbyrån	Organization	Aid agency	59	3,40%	3884 page
Volontärhjälpen	Network	Refugee focused network	423	5,70%	3108 group
TOTAL			8074	12,60%	

*Table 1: Groups and pages*

#### **Word stems**

fantastisk



glädje

hjälte

hjärta

kämpa

kärlek

stolt

underbar

vänner

älska

#### **English translation**

fantastic

heart emoji

joy

hero

heart

fight

love

proud

wonderful

friends

love

*Table 2: Enthusiastic word stems*

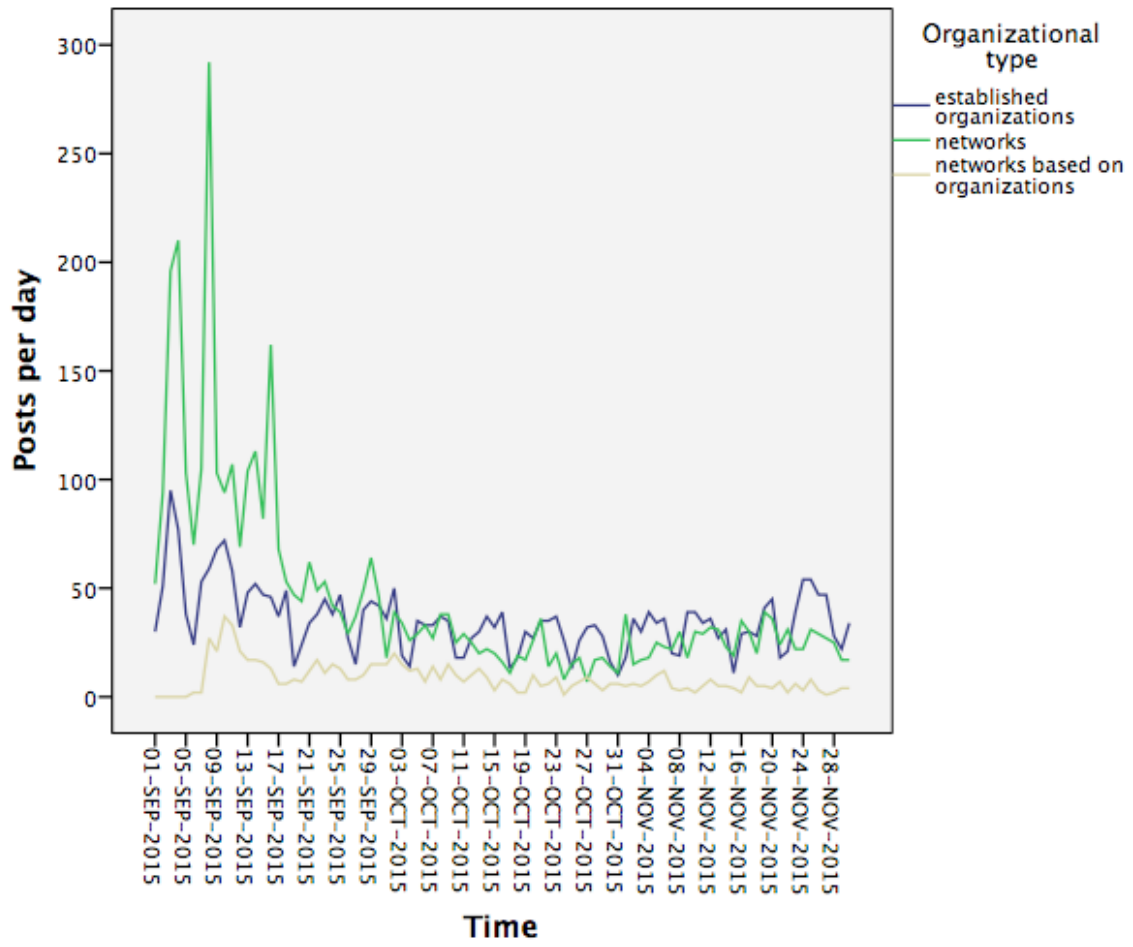


Figure 1: Number of Facebook posts per day and type of organization


**Pay it forward** har lagt till 5 nya foton.  
 den 20 september 2015 • 🌐

**#uddevalla**  
 Tusen tack LSK och Ljungskileborna! ❤️ En halv lastbil med varma kläder, jackor, skor och filtar blev det! Ett underbart initiativ av Erika som fick hjälp av fantastiska volontärer! Tack också till våra fantastiska chaufförer som inte bara fixa en lastbil utan också körde det till Uddevalla efter matchen!  
 Så underbart att se att hela Sverige rör sig! 😊  
**#LSK #payitforward #äLSKadinnästa**




👍 Gilla    💬 Kommentera    ➦ Dela

👍 85

Figure 2: Example of post coded as enthusiastic.

Translation of text: “#uddevalla Many thanks to LSK and the people in Uddevalla! ❤️ We got half a truck with warm clothes, jackets, shoes and blankets in the end. A wonderful initiative by Erika who got help from fantastic volunteers! Also thanks to our fantastic drivers who not only secured a truck, but drove it all to Uddevalla after the game! How wonderful to see how all of Sweden is on the move! 😊 #LSK #payitforward #loveyourneighbour”  
 Note: LSK, Ljungskile Sport Club, is a football team from a small town close to the city of Uddevalla, located in western Sweden.

Veckans hjältar! ❤️ (Vi vet, det är bara måndag än så länge, men läs det här så kommer du att förstå...)

Vi fick ett mejl från några lärare:

"Vi arbetar på en liten skola i södra Sverige. Vi har nu haft ett projekt där eleverna i åk 1-3 ville göra något för att hjälpa andra barn och vuxna på flykt. De bestämde sig för att sätta upp affischer över hela vår by med erbjudande att kratta och räfsa upp löv i trädgårdar i utbyte mot en valfri peng som de i sin tur ska skänka. Sagt och gjort. Vi fick uppdrag av ett tiotal husägare som ville ha vår hjälp. Så två skoldagar ägnade eleverna och vi två vuxna åt att vara ute och gå från trädgård till trädgård. Eleverna fick lära sig mycket och efter vårt uppdrag har diskussionerna fortsatt. Vi har pratat om mänskliga rättigheter, människovärde, hur barn i andra länder kan ha det och mycket mer, dessutom övade de sig i ledarskap och samarbete när vi var ute."

Lövkattningen räckte till: skolpaket för 40 barn, 5 filtar, 30 doser mässlingsvaccin, 50 påsar nötkräm mot undernäring, 60 doser poliovaccin och 3500 vattenreningstabletter. Alltihop inhandlat i UNICEFs gåvoshop (här: [bit.ly/1YCLimg](http://bit.ly/1YCLimg)) enligt vad eleverna bestämt tillsammans.

"Barnen vet nu att alla kan inte göra allt men alla kan gör något!" avslutar lärarna och hälsar från "Lövbuserna".

TACK "Lövbuserna" och lärarna för ert fantastiska stöd till barn och deras familjer! ❤️



👍 Gilla    💬 Kommentera    ➦ Dela

👍❤️ 4,8t

Relevanta kommentarer ▾

423 delningar

147 kommentarer

Figure 3: Example of enthusiastic post.

Translation of text: Heroes of the week! ❤️ <3 (We know, it's only Monday still, but read this and you will understand...) We received an email from a couple of teachers: "We work in a small school in Southern Sweden. We have had a project where the students in grades 1-3 wanted to do something to help other children and adults who are refugees. They decided to put up posters all over our village offering to rake leaves in the gardens in exchange for an unspecified donation which they in turn will pay forward. Said and done. We received offers from around ten homeowners who wanted our help. So, the students and us two adults spent two school days outside, going from garden to garden. The students learnt a lot and after our mission the discussions have continued. We have discussed human rights, human value, the situation of children in other countries and much more, and besides, they practiced leadership and cooperation when we were outside." The leave-raking was enough to buy school packages for 40 children, 5 blankets, 30 doses of measles vaccine, 50 units of nut cream against malnourishment, 60 doses of polio vaccine and 3500 water purification tablets. All of it purchased in the gift shop of UNICEF (here: [link](http://bit.ly/1YCLimg)) according to the students' decision. "The children no now that everyone cannot do everything, but everyone can do something!" the teachers add and send greetings from "The Leave Rascals". THANK YOU "Leave Rascals" and the teachers for your fantastic support to children and their families! ❤️



Figure 4: Example of post coded as enthusiastic

Translation of text: Fantastic work you are doing ...completely wonderful..sent you some money by Swish. Note: Swish is a Swedish mobile payment system.

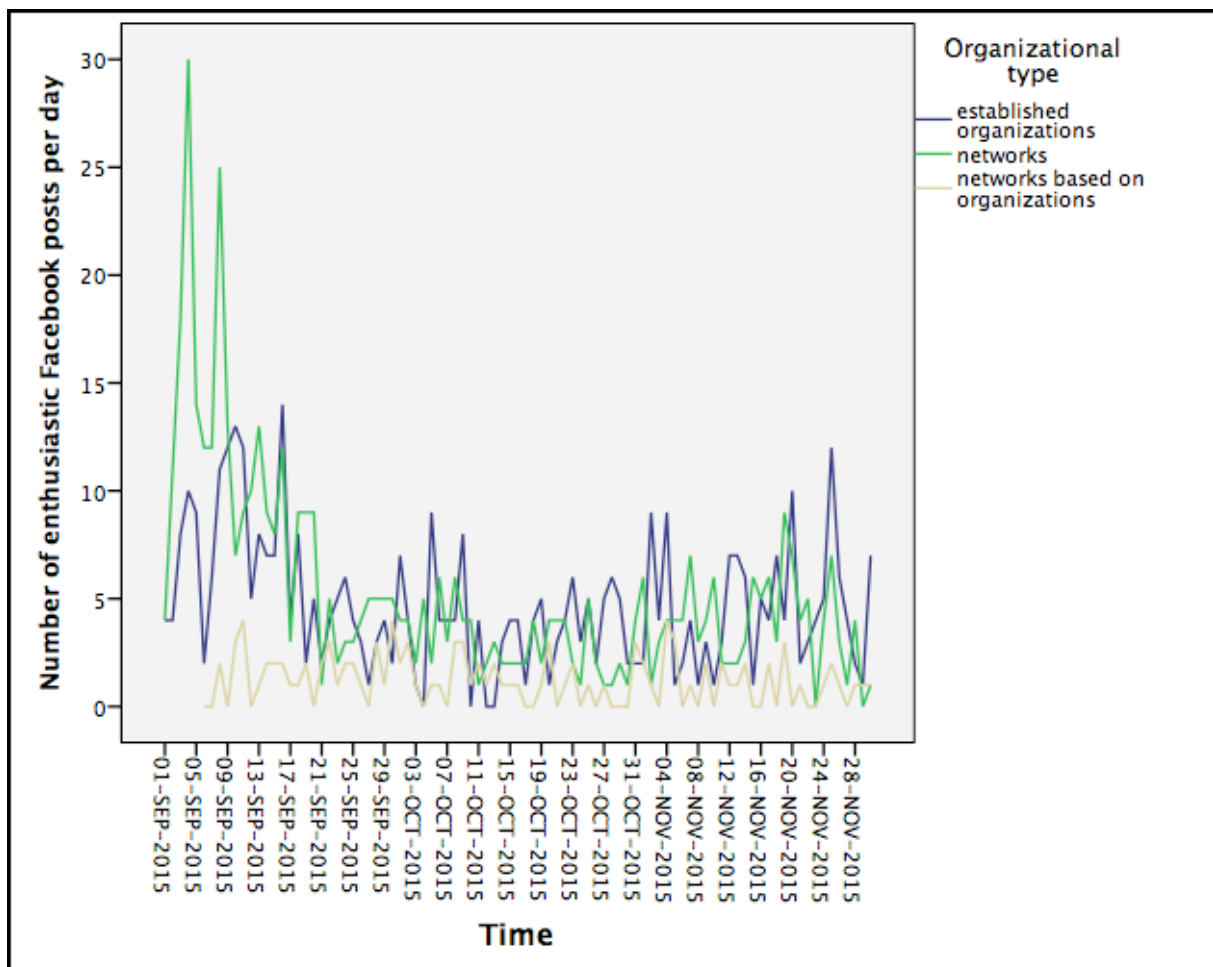


Figure 5: Number of enthusiastic Facebook posts per day and type of organization



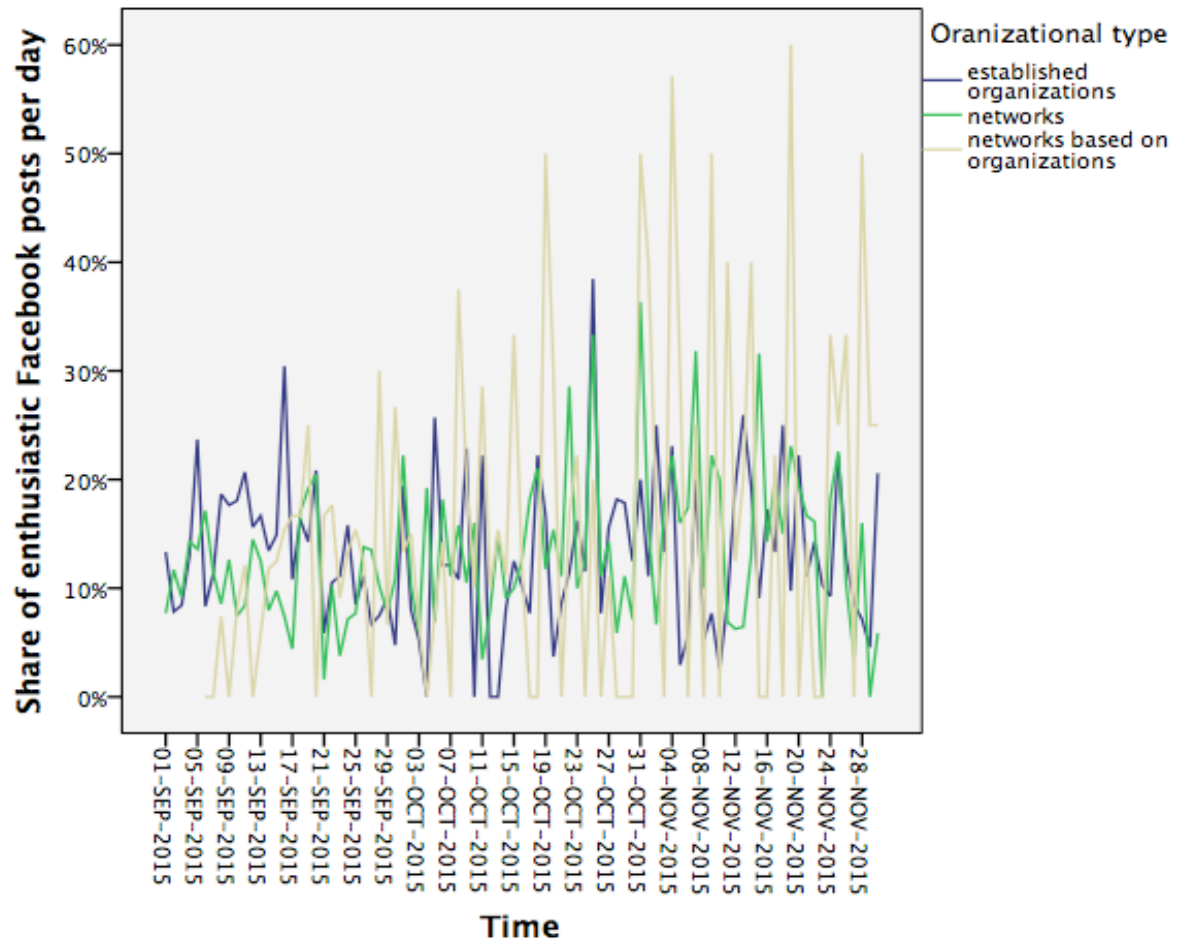


Figure 6: Share of enthusiastic Facebook posts per day and type of organization (per cent)