SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF DUTCH NGOS

Full Paper

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Abstract

This paper presents views of six Dutch development NGOs on possibilities and threats of social media for their work. A systematic analysis of the literature and the systematic analysis of the interviews yield an interesting theoretical framework in which social media characteristics are cross-referenced with NGO organisational characteristics. The resulting preliminary framework of emerging themes suggests that potential disadvantages associated with social media use may impede the organisational use. Furthermore it is suggested that potential organisational uses of social media may motivate use and adaptation of the social media use to a development context. It is also suggested that disadvantages attributed to social media may influence the use or non-use of social media for particular developmental activities.

Keywords: Social media, Organisational social media, NGO, ICT for Development.

1   Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be a powerful enabler of development goals, because its unique characteristics improve communication and the exchange of information to strengthen and create new economic and social networks (UNDP, 2001). Social media can be seen as one in a long line of ICTs that have been used in this way. Summarised the reasons for this potential are: faster and easier information delivery, dissemination of information and knowledge, connectivity and network creation, efficiency and transparency gains, transformation of people's lives and lastly decentralisation & empowerment (McNamara, 2003, Yamamichi, 2011). In this context ICT as an enabler of development is also referred to as ICT for Development (ICT4D or ICTD). Heeks argues there is greater need for ICT for sustainability in his analysis of post-2015 ICT4D priorities (Heeks, 2014). Furthermore he adds that the ICT4D field is struggling with grasping the potential of emerging technologies such as cloud and social media. How social media is used in the area of development is a key issue for NGOs (Waters, 2009, Kanter and Fine, 2010). The impact of social media for development purposes is still an on-going research process where few have conducted systematic research yet. Organisations are trying to get to grips with the latest digital technologies, and Dutch development NGOs are no different. Incorporating these new rapidly evolving digital technologies like social media bring challenges to these organisations. The NGOs and their staff try to make sense of social media and its value for development projects while they lack complete knowledge of these new technologies or are overwhelmed by the various social media and their applications which therefore have the potential for multiple interpretations and effects. In that sense social media can be called equivocal technology where organisations such as the development NGOs struggle with sense making on the application of social media for their projects (Berente et al., 2011). Even when equivocal technology such as social media are thought to make new organisational usage possible, the specific applications are not well stated or comprehended or information is incomplete or ambiguous (Swanson and Ramiller, 1997). This quest for sense making brings up an overall contextual overlay for this research project. Therefore the focus of the research is on understanding how the developments NGOs cope with social media. The research question is formulated as:

How do Dutch NGOs perceive the opportunities and pitfalls of social media as a tool for their development projects?

A conceptual framework is used for this research. The approach of the study is to analyse in a conceptual manner without focusing on any particular social media technology or relying too much on today's social media technology. This implies to look deeper into the emerging and (un)expected associated attributes of technology by human interaction. The next section sets out the literature review that is pertinent to the research problem.

2   Literature

In the literature review we highlight the concept of social media, its use by of non-governmental organisations, and the role of social media in the context of development.

2.1   Social media use by non-profit organisations

The concept of social media has a technological foundation, it is a social phenomenon, and has overarching principles. For the purpose of this research, social media is defined as a techno-social system for participatory culture, having characteristics like: openness, participation, conversation, connectedness and community. This definition relies heavily on the ideas set forward by Fuchs (2013) and Mayfield (2008). The terms social media, social networks (SNSs) and web 2.0 are often interchanged in usage (Parameswaran, 2007, Iriberri and Leroy, 2009, Zuniga and White, 2009). All definitions share at least the characteristics participation, openness, conversation, connectedness and community

(Mayfield, 2008). Participation refers to the encouragement of contributing and feedback from everyone. Openness refers to the apparent lack of barriers to access, make use and share content. The conversation characteristic is with social media extended to two-way conversation rather than merely broadcasting. Connectedness highlights the ability to link to other sites, resources and people with social media. Lastly, community reflects group forming around common interests.

The number of social media users has seen a remarkable growth across the globe, while most growth is expected in Asia, Latin-America, the Middle East and Africa now (UNDP, 2013, Aka et al., 2013, Pew, 2014). Around the world, home-grown social network still play an important role next to the dominant global social networks like Facebook (Aka et al., 2013). Most users in developing countries get online by a mobile device (ITU, 2013). Kanter and Fine (2010) state that non-profit organisations frequently create "fortresses" and dread what is shared to the general public. They argue that NGOs can become a 'networked non-profit organisation' by interacting with their stakeholders and the community as a whole in real and transparent ways through the use of social media reiterating the importance of relationship building through social media (Kanter and Fine, 2010). Waters et al. (2009) found that non-profit organisations mainly use social media to streamline management functions, inform the public and communicate with stakeholders, often not using the full potential of the interactive nature of social media. Online development networks may contribute to knowledge sharing between development organisations (Cummings et al., 2006). Bott and Young (2012) identify that crowdsourcing is not only limited to industrialised countries but already has a strong impact in developing countries. Crowdsourcing is used to create and increase collective knowledge, community building, collective creativity and innovation, crowd funding, cloud labour and civic engagement (Bott and Young, 2012, Esposti, 2012).

2.2 Social media in the context of development

More and more development organisations are discovering the power of social media to affect change (Ørecomm, 2012). Social media have been used for social good, such as organising community activism, for empowering citizens, and for coordinating emergency or disaster relief efforts (Bresciani and Schmeil, 2012). Examples of mapping disaster struck regions using social media like Twitter, Ushahidi and other platforms, in China, Haiti and Chile after the earthquakes, and in the Philippines after typhoon Hayan, have shown the potential of crowdsourcing for the NGOs involved with relief activities (Crowley and Chan, 2011, Livingston and Walter-Drop, 2014, Meier, 2014). As a result updated maps facilitated the difficult logistical task for getting relief in the disaster area. Zuniga and White (2009) argue that the relevance of social media in the context of aid and development covers four broad areas; connecting with other; collaborating with other people; creating and sharing content; and finding, using, organizing and reusing content. Thompson and Heeks urge for further research including empirical examples of attempts to introduce Web 2.0 (social media) models to serve developmental aims (Thompson, 2008, Heeks, 2008). This study serves as a particular example to that aim.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are active players in the field of international development, both as providers of aid and services to underprivileged communities as well as policy advocates (Clarke, 1998, Atack, 1999). They are recognised as key third sector actors in the landscapes of international development, humanitarian action, human rights, environment and many other areas of public action (Lewis, 2010). Despite the enormous diversity of NGOs, a general definition of NGOs is nonetheless possible within the context of this research. NGOs have the following five characteristics: *institutionalised organisation, separate from the government (non-state), non-profit, self-governing and often some degree of voluntary participation in its activities* (Korten, 1990, Salamon and Anheier, 1992, Lewis and Kanji, 2009).

Masetti-Zannini (2007) states that *"NGOs need relevant and correct information from the bottom of the development pyramid to make knowledgeable decisions about their work."* At the same time, they need to ensure that information reaches those who need it to empower them, and help them make informed decisions about their lives he argues. Aitamurto (2011) discusses the changing role of non-profit organisations from intermediary to a platform facilitator in a networked organisation. Powell

(2003) warns that if this information loop is weak or lacking, the decisions taken by development NGOs can be erroneous, or have unintended negative consequences. Furthermore, next to language issues and (digital) illiteracy, relevance of information, cross-cultural differences should not be overlooked when using social media (Toyama, 2010, Andres and Woodard, 2013, Owiny et al., 2014). Sometimes development NGOs struggle with communicating the complex message of development issues (Mefalopulos, 2008). Ballantyne and Addison (2000) and Ferguson et al. (2013) observe growing online collaboration and knowledge sharing between NGOs.

Masetti-Zannini (2007), van Stam (2014) and Owiny et al. (2014) advocate that development NGOs should embrace traditional knowledge-management practices and social Web 2.0 technology to tap into the indigenous knowledge and voices of the South. Thompson (2008) calls the convergence of Web 2.0 and development studies 'Development 2.0'. Development 2.0 (or international cooperation 2.0) is characterised by massive online collaboration, self-organisation, open-source marketing, collective intelligence and crowd sourcing (Jansen, 2009) and aimed at achieving development goals (Kirstein Junge, 2012). Others are more cautious about the benefits of social media for NGOs. Although the Internet facilitates the control or influence of individual people and small organizations and stimulates agency, it is not certain that the poorest will be reached and engaged (Baud, 2009).

2.3 Adopted conceptual framework: NGOs' use of social media in development

A conceptual framework is used for this research, namely NGOs' use of social media in the context of development. The approach of the study is to analyse in a conceptual manner without focusing on any particular social media technology or relying too much on today's social media technology. This approach relates NGOs' characteristics to social media characteristics.

Characteristics of NGOs / Social Media Characteristics	Institutionalised organisation	Non-profit	Self-governing & Separate from the government	Voluntary participants
Openness	Tapping into knowledge and voices of the South (Masetti-Zannini, 2007, Owiny et al., 2014) Social media may contribute to human-centred development (Carlman, 2010) .	NGOs have become effective infomediaries (Graham and Haarstad, 2011).	Open development: positive change through "open" information-networked activities (Smith et al., 2011)	Finding, using, organising and reusing content; creating and sharing content (Zuniga and White, 2009)
Participation	NGOs struggle to build effective participation mechanisms in the developing world (Masetti-Zannini, 2007). Social media empower NGOs by enabling participation and knowledge aggregation (Punie, 2011). Social media transforming patterns of work and interactions (Suarez, 2009).	Non-profits likely to share their own information (Lovejoy et al., 2012). NGOs will need to produce more high-quality content to attract and engage audiences (RockefellerFoundation, 2014)	Increasing decentralisation in development (Ballantyne and Addison, 2000). Social media may be less successful in reducing "the structural problems that weaken participation, especially inequality" (Edwards, 2011).	Collaborating and doing things (Zuniga and White, 2009) Role for communication in trying to influence stakeholders' voluntary change (Mefalopulos, 2008). Potential of crowdsourcing for relief activities (Crowley and Chan, 2011, Livingston and Walter-Drop, 2014, Meier, 2014).
Conversation	Auger (2013) suggests non-profit organisations use different social media for different purposes. Non-profit organisations are primarily using Twitter to convey one-way messages, as a means of	Informing the public and communicating with stakeholders (Waters et al., 2009b).	Social media facilitates networked communication between NGOs and by NGOs with political actors on a global stage (Fenton, 2009).	Resistance of staff to change working habits inhibits social media use (Mefalopulos, 2008, Kanter and Fine, 2010). Citizens empowerment (Bresciani and Schmeil, 2012)

	sharing information instead of relationship building Waters and Jamal (2011).			
Connectedness	Connecting via social networks (Zuniga and White, 2009).	'Networked non-profit organisation' (Kanter and Fine, 2010). The effects of social media on organisations and individuals (van Alphen, 2009, Blom, 2009, Waters, 2009) Low-cost solution for engaging with and obtaining information from the public (Lutu, 2015).	Networking is often between individuals rather than a formal and institutionalised undertaking (Holmén, 2002). Social media strengthen connectivity and information flows and can sometimes affect the balance of power in society (Edwards, 2011)	Potential of crowdsourcing for disaster relief activities (Crowley and Chan, 2011, Livingston and Walter-Drop, 2014, Meier, 2014) Crowdsourcing has a strong impact in developing countries (Bott and Young, 2012).
Community	Attention to the notion of 'communities' in the development sector. (Ballantyne and Addison, 2000)	Information -sharing and mutual learning as string motivation for networking among NGOs (Holmén, 2002). Online development networks may contribute to knowledge sharing between development organisations (Cummings et al., 2006).	Increasing decentralisation (Ballantyne and Addison, 2000). Develop relationships with stakeholders (Waters et al., 2009b) Community activism (Bresciani and Schmeil, 2012).	Community forming around shared ideals or technologies. (Berdou, 2011) Social media have been used for social good (Bresciani and Schmeil, 2012)

Table 1.   Cross-referencing NGO and social media characteristics in the context of Development.

Central to this view is the view that what technologies bring about in practice, can only be comprehended by focusing on their material performance in relationship with its interaction with humans (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). Therefore a further inspection of the linkage between NGO and social media characteristics in the literature may hold clues for this research. Table 1 cross-references the characteristics of social media, based on Mayfield (2008), with the five most common characteristics of NGOs, as argued by Salamon and Anheier (1992) and Lewis and Kanji (2009). Two of the NGO characteristics are combined in one column. Considering the various features of an NGO, versus the potentialities of social media this should allow a more nuanced understanding of the research problem and understating NGOs social media activities.

3   Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of this research, a qualitative research was adopted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The methodology of grounded theory method combined with a multiple case study was applied. In this study, the research approach used is the Glaserian grounded theory method (Glaser, 1978, Glaser, 2002). It was used for both data analysis as well as theory building. Case studies are particularly valuable for understanding complex phenomena in context (Crotty, 1998). The combination of case studies and Grounded Theory has been rewarding for IS researchers as claimed by Lehmann (2001) and Allan (2003).

Aid & development organisations in the Netherlands that are actively using social media were identified by desk research, an online survey and also through consultation with experts in the aid & development field. Interviews provide a good way of collecting data from the decision makers in these organisations and are one of the most important sources of case study information (Yin, 2003). They help capturing the perception on the use of social media. All interviews were digitally recorded. The recordings were transcribed and manually coded. The interviews were in Dutch, and after transcribing coded using English terms. Additional data from web pages and reports was also collected as complementary secondary sources for this study.

NGO ID	Development NGO pseudonym	Interviewees	NGO age	Staff size	Single-issue vs. Multi-issue	Organisation-wide/Dept. Focused use of social media
A	Crowdsourcing	2	1-5 years	Mid-size	Multi-issue	Organisation-wide
B	Water & platform	1	6-15 years	Mid-size	Single-issue	Organisation-wide
C	Mobile phone focused	1	1-5 years	Mid-size	Multi-issue	Organisation-wide
D	Confederated	2	> 15 years	Large	Multi-issue	Department-focused
E	Traumatised children	1	6-15 years	Large	Single-issue	Department-focused
F	Advocacy	2	> 15 years	Large	Multi-issue	Organisation-wide

Table 2.   Characteristics of the examined development organisations.

Some of the characteristics of the analysed aid and development organisations for this pilot study are summarised in Table 2. Staff size is from 'Small' for less than 11, 'Mid-size' for 11 till 75, to 'Large for more than 75 people. Each organisation's focus on one or more areas of interest is considered, for example only healthcare or a broad range of themes like education and poverty reduction. This is labelled 'Single-issue' respectively 'Multi-issue'. Finally the use of social media use across the whole organisation or mainly located in one department is presented in the table. The data collection spanned the time period from November 2010 to October 2013. Data analysis was conducted using grounded theory method. Data analysis proceeded from open coding (identifying categories, properties and dimensions) through selective coding (clustering around categories), to theoretical coding (Trochim, 2006, Urquhart, 2013). The selective codes (i.e. categories) were identified after grouping the open codes and finding close conceptual relation among the open codes that were clustered. Theoretical coding considers the relationships between these codes (Glaser, 1978).

4   Findings

4.1   Three emerging themes

Three main themes, based on selective codes, emerged from the analysis. The selective codes which were the basis for the three themes were identified after grouping the open codes and finding close conceptual relationships among the open codes. The selective code 'Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media' refers to all uses of social media in the context of an organisation. It does not necessarily mean this defines organisational social media, but it tells how the respondents in the context of their work and organisation perceive what social media means to them. The selective code 'Adapting Social Media to Development Context' reflects the specific ways social media may be used in the context of development. And finally, the selective code 'Potential Disadvantages' refers to potential issues that are arising when using social media.

Selective code	Open codes	Summary of analytical memo
Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media	Social media monitoring and analysis; Collecting data via mobiles; Specific groups (segmentation); Personalised/contextual/targeted content; Binding; Integral (communication) strategy; Social marketing tool; Branding; Cross-media approach; Attuned message; Own platforms; Using platforms that are broadly used; Image; Positive message; Making website social; Online campaigns; Web 2.0 organisation; Experimenting; Internal (organisational) use; Inter-organisational; Up-to-date appearance; Constant activity; Actuality; Fast response; Always-on; Potential for experimenting; Proven tool; Communication tool; Collaboration; Connecting; Interaction; Involvement ; Network	This encompasses all uses of social media in the context of an organisation.
Adapting Social Media	Storytelling; Knowing the local context; Transparent communication;	Where we speak of specific

to Development Context	Outreach to women; Awareness; Stimulating behaviour change; Monitoring & evaluation of projects; (Mobile) reporting; Knowledge management;; Demand-driven; Thematic; Credibility; Education; Marketplace; Open source; Open Data; Partnerships; Gaming & contests; Providing incentives;; Community building; Wisdom of crowds; Crowd funding; International Cooperation 2.0; Outreach via mobiles; Crowdsourcing; Crowd funding & fundraising; Dialogue and engagement; Learning (from others); Listening to criticism; Lightweight communication; Tone of voice;	ways that social media may be used in the context of development or where we see social media may contribute to development.
Potential Disadvantages	Scepticism on online fundraising; Language issues; Phone sharing issues; Web care policy; No blind focus on metrics; Overreliance on social media; Only in-crowd reached; Difficulty due to volatility of medium; Online vs. Offline; Oversimplification (of message); Resistance of own (older) staff; Slow response by large organisation; Need to be cautious what to put online; Reputation damage; Exposure of failure; Acceptance of mistakes	Potential issues that are arising when using social media.

Table 3.   Overview of identified selective codes and open codes.

4.2   Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media

This theme represents the respondents' notion of what organisational social media is. It does not necessarily mean this defines social media, but does convey how, for the respondents, social media is perceived in the context of their work and organisation. The findings show that the respondents from all these NGOs associate aspects like 'Collaboration', 'Connecting' and 'Interaction' with social media. Some of the open codes that were found under the selective code of 'Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media' are illustrated. One of the open codes 'Up-to-date appearance'. The respondent of case A replied when asked to characterise social media: *"Social media is like a shopping window in a mall, it needs to be maintained to attract attention".* This emphasises the volatility and speed to operate the respondent is sensing when he is asked to characterise social media. In case E the following was said: *"My idea of social media. Uhmm, the first thing that comes to my mind is dynamics and change. One of the interesting aspects with social media is that it fully opens up communication"* Furthermore the respondent of case A linked the development of the organisation to characteristics of social media: *"International cooperation 1.0 equals broadcasting. International cooperation 2.0 incorporates use of social media and is about transmitting and receiving at the same time. It's like a network".* The respondent in case A argued that the network idea in the context of international aid and development meant doesn't not mean devising a grand plan to solve poverty, but people in developing countries can present online their own ideas to solve issues and other people across the world can contribute ('Crowdsourcing'), which makes this demand-driven. Key findings for the selective code 'Perceptions of Social Media' are:

Key findings for the selective code 'Perceptions of Social Media'
• All the NGOs find collaboration an important characteristic of social media.
• Connecting and interaction are also characterised as important features of social media.
• The network aspect of social media is also identified as a key feature of social media.
• Some NGOs are aware of the concept of International Cooperation 2.0 (or Development 2.0) when thinking of what social media could mean for them.
• One of the organisations particularly identifies communication via mobile phone part of the definition of social media.
• Some of the NGOs consider the use of social media just an additional tool of how they deal with communication media in general. It seems social media is additional marketing communication channel.

4.3   Adapting Social Media to Development Context

Looking at the selective code 'Adapting Social Media to Development Context', the first open code that was identified was 'Social media monitoring and analysis'. The respondent in case A told that they analyse social media to determine the effects of campaigns, and see if they coincide with their forecasts. The aims for using social media become apparent in the next excerpt from the interview in

case D: *"Goals [for using social media]…It depends. Sometimes it is raising awareness but also donations or signing a petition. We are not very active in fundraising online. It happens but mostly for emergency aid."* The respondent further explained that the goals for social media are set per campaign and campaigns are made within the annual communication strategy. 'Storytelling' was illustrated by an example in which the respondent in case A explained the power of a story and how this can be used in social media. He has trained local NGOs at a workshop on digital storytelling & social media in Uganda. When creating digital stories text, images, audio and video are interwoven and can be easily updated while social networks help to distribute the content fast. One particular open code encountered is 'Knowing the local context'. The respondent said during the interview: *"People who live in developing countries often have the best ideas on how they can solve problems, and, in fact, they must be able to present that simply online."* The incorporation of local knowledge may result in more effective aid & development projects, he argued. This is linked to the process of making sense from the technological intervention with social media, which is a prime element of this research. Key findings for the selective code 'Using Social Media for Development' are:

Key findings for the selective code 'Using Social Media for Development'
• Only a couple of the NGOs intensively monitor and analyse their social media activities.
• Having knowledge of the local context and specifically targeting to certain groups is a practice that all the NGOs seem to apply when using social media.
• The application of collecting data via mobile phone as part of the social media activities is also mentioned by a majority of the examined NGOs.
• When using social media mistakes can be made and to learn from these is something the NGOs are aware of.
• Some of the studied NGOs collaborate with other NGOs to learn how to use social media.
• Social media is also used by some NGOs for communication between organisations.
• Crowdsourcing, specific crowd funding and fundraising is mentioned as a practice by some NGOs.
• Some of the studied NGOs take room for experimenting when using social media.

4.4   Potential Disadvantages

Potential Disadvantages reveals the issues that respondents mentioned and they recognise while using social media for their organisation. Some of the findings are described hereafter. One respondent warned for 'Overreliance on social media': *"Social media is not holy; it should be a part of your communication strategy. one cannot solely depend on social media, because what you are left with then is what Facebook, Twitter and the other platforms have to offer."* Another issue for using social media has to do with the message that the organisation want to tell. The respondent said: *"The problem is explaining complex abstract bigger stories, whereas a small story or project is easier to show online and to get support for. See for example [name of NGO A] with only projects. My organisation struggles with this."* This has been identified as 'Issue with (over)simplification' of the message on social media. The organisation of case B is aware of certain risk that may be associated with social media use according to the respondent but it does not halt them from experimenting as mentioned before. He raised the issue of possible 'Reputation damage': *"There is the risk of open communication. Everything can be exposed. It is hard to be open at the same time, as well as ensuring the quality of the information."* The respondent from NGO D thinks that another barrier for using social media is related to slow response. Her impression is that larger organisations suffer more by this. She told that the organisation has ideas for reporting online (via for example YouTube) but the older generation of staff is afraid of that and rather uses the traditional way of communication. The issue of either oversimplifying the message or the difficulty to address certain issues was raised. In case E the respondent said: *"[Social media] are not useful for profound or comprehensive communication."* In case F the language barrier was mentioned: *"Partners in the South don't speak Dutch. They will now follow Dutch twitter streams"*. A barrier for sharing knowledge was also mentioned: *": when knowledge is*

being shared, it will weaken you as an organisation. It makes the neighbour NGO better and weakens your own organisation." To summarise the key findings:

Key findings for the selective code 'Potential Disadvantages'
• Various barriers that may hinder using social media were mentioned.
• Aspects that were identified to form barriers for using social media were related to the
• Possible difficulty of conveying a complex message, the resistance of own staff, the need to respond fast on social networks.

4.5 Relationships between themes

As a first step in a preliminary theory building effort about how Dutch development NGOs might consider social media adoption, theoretical coding (Glaser, 1978) was carried out, where relationships between the themes were analysed.

A preliminary diagram of the themes and their relationships emerged. The first relationship that emerged is that between the selective code 'Potential Disadvantages' that may impede 'Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media'. The second relationship that was identified between the emerging themes is 'Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media' and 'Adapting Social Media to Development Context' where the first may motivate the latter. The third relationship identified is how the themes 'Adapting Social Media to Development Context' interacts (bi-directional) with 'Potential Disadvantages'. All three relationships are exemplified by examples. The three themes combine into a diagram that shows the emergent themes and their relations (Figure 1). The ideas those organisations and their staff have of the disadvantages of social media use, the threats it brings or the hurdles that have to be crossed, impede the attributed potential of social media use by the organisation. In its turn organisational media may motivate adapting it for a development context. This adaptation of social media for development interacts with the potential disadvantages of social media. The bi-directional nature of this interaction is illustrated by the two quotes linked to the double arrow in the diagram.
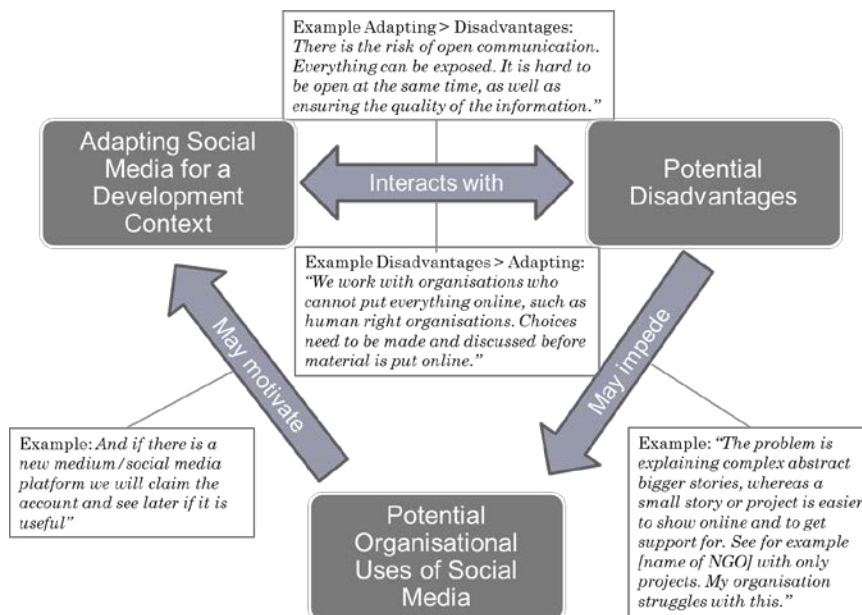

Figure 1.   Relationship between emerging themes for Social Media and Development NGOs.

4.6 Applying the conceptual framework on the findings

When the data are compared with the conceptual framework derived from the literature illustrative examples and their open codes can be inserted (Table 4).

Characteristics of NGOs / Social Media Characteristics	Institutionalised organisation	Non-profit	Self-governing & Separate from the government	Voluntary participants
Openness	Knowing the local context: *"People who live in developing countries often have the best ideas on how they can solve problems, and, in fact, they must be able to present that simply online."*	Communication: *"One of the interesting aspects with social media is that it fully opens up communication."*	Positive message: *"People in developing countries see a picture of a poor person as a 'victim'. Therefore we use the image of 'local hero' instead... Image is important and the message communicated should be positive. Not playing the moral or guilt card."*	Targeted approach: *"The message is adapted to the medium"* Openness: *"We are very active with blogging. Very open, we are an open source [organisation]"*
Participation	'Online vs. offline' dichotomy: *"You actually have two worlds; you have the old one, that's all large organisations. And then you have social media which is a very open network, but I don't believe that the one can do without the other...you can achieve most success by joining the two worlds."*	Raising awareness: *"A large part of the work here is aimed at getting people to commit to us and to raise funds. Social media are an important channel for this."*	International cooperation 2.0: *"International cooperation 1.0 equals broadcasting. International cooperation 2.0 incorporates use of social media and is about transmitting and receiving at the same time. It's like a network"*	Outreach to women: *"Mobile phones are not only for men, but also for women [in Kenya]"* Goals: *"Sometimes it is raising awareness but also donations or signing a petition. We are not very active in fundraising online. It happens but mostly for emergency aid."*
Conversation	Tone of voice: *"We communicate differently to East-Africans than to Dutch people"* Oversimplifying the message: *"[Social media] are not useful for profound or comprehensive communication."*	Reputation damage: *"There is the risk of open communication. Everything can be exposed. It is hard to be open at the same time, as well as ensuring the quality of the information."*	Interaction with their audience: *"Interaction is important and we always react when somebody poses questions to use on our social media platforms. We talk back and do that daily."*	Relationship building: *"Strategy from 'Trust me', via 'Tell me' and 'Show me' to 'Involve me'.*
Connectedness	Making the website social: *"We have brought together elements from various social media that we find important into one system what makes it more useful for our partners."*	Integral (communication) strategy: *"Social media is completely interwoven into the [NGO A]. For me it is very difficult to separate them. For me it's not a choice between social media or... [the rest]."*	Communication tool: *"Our social media strategy is a part of our communication strategy because we believe that social media is just another communication tool. And our communication strategy is based on connecting."*	Bonding: *"If I tell you that we have so many people to bind to us, then social media is a very promising channel, a medium. Because of the ability to communicate very quickly."*
Community	Tone of voice: *"...in our tone of voice the language we speak is less development jargon, but we try to*	Learning from mistakes: *"Regarding failures... The [text message] code 666 does not work in a*	Development 2.0 *"is an important trend, not only for fundraising and campaigning but also for use*	Outreach via mobile technology: *"Social media is a way to work together, mostly on internet but in*

	appeal our audience, who is not attracted by such jargon or language."	*Christian country like Uganda[1]."* Experimenting: *"There is room for experimenting and if something doesn't work it does not matter."*	*in the work in developing countries, for example in countries where human rights are violated. There are many chances for NGOs in social media use."*	*principle social media is all types of media which is meant to bring together people and have intelligent information exchange. This becomes more effective with mobile."*

Table 4.   Cross-reference of NGO and social media characteristics- integrated with selective codes and examples of open codes from our study.

5   Discussion

5.1   Potential Organisational Uses of Social Media

This theme represents the respondents' notion of what organisational social media is. It does not necessarily mean this defines social media, but does convey how, for the respondents, social media is perceived in the context of their work and organisation. The findings show that the respondents from all these NGOs associate aspects like 'Collaboration', 'Connecting' and 'Interaction' with social media. These aspects are in agreement with definitions for social media like the ones from Mayfield (2008) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). Interaction was found to be important if organisations were to develop relationships with their stakeholders (Jo and Kim, 2003).

Collaboration is important for the operation of international aid and development organisations (Woldhek and Kleef, 2009). The notion that mobile phones are included in perception of what social media constitutes is corroborated by Yamamichi (2011) who speaks of mobile-enabled social media, and the role that mobile technology can have for social development. The idea NGOs have of the workings of network of people confirms O'Reilly's view on social media (O'Reilly, 2005). It also touches the concept that the role of non-profit organisations is changing from middleman to a platform facilitator in a networked organisation (Aitamurto, 2011). The respondents put more emphasis on the collaborative, connecting and interactive aspect of social media and didn't mention the finding and (re-)using of content a part of their definition of social media, cf. Zuniga and White (2009).

Most of the NGOs do seem to be aware of the use of social media for development purposes as advocated by Zuniga and White (2009) and not merely utilise it only as a communication tool. Although the statement is slightly contradicted by the findings in which some NGOs consider social media just another communication tool (c.f. Curtis et al. 2010) they are aware of its potential and monitor its effect. The aspect of 'attuned message' as mentioned in one of the cases underwrites Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) suggestion to avoid contradicting messages across communication channels or social media and websites used. The deployment of the organisations' own developed social networks platform is also suggested by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010). Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) argue that micro blogging such as Twitter provide non-profit organisations better means "*to strategically engage their stakeholders*". This intensive use of micro blogging was described as a useful lightweight way of communication in case B. Waters and Jamal (2011) found that non-profit organisations are primarily using Twitter to convey one-way messages, as a means of sharing information instead of relationship building. In case B it was extensively used for dialogue and two-way communication. Although Waters et al. (2009a) advise non-profit organisations to monitor, analyse and carefully plan their social media activities as they try to develop social networking relationships with their stakeholders the reali-

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[1] 666 is seen as The Number of the Beast, as mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament book and Christians in Uganda feel uncomfortable to be associated with this by dialling that number.

ty is that this is carried out by a few of the analysed cases. Edwards et al. (1999) argue that "only limited numbers of NGOs have the analytical skills and detailed local knowledge that are needed to judge the impact of NGO activity".

5.2 Adapting Social Media to Development Context

This theme or selective code shows the social media activities adapted by the examined NGO for development purposes. The findings show that the analysed NGOs are aware of using local knowledge in their social media activities. Grewal et al. (2012) have identified three major segments of data collection activities by NGOs: monitoring & evaluation, programme specific data collection based on thematic areas of intervention and paid for data collection on behalf of external organisations. The technology most used in data collection in Africa is SMS. That popularity is attributed to availability of SMS on all mobile phones and networks and the familiarity with it for many users (Boyera et al., 2012).

The concept of 'Development 2.0'(or International Cooperation 2.0) was mentioned by several organisations where international cooperation 2.0 (or Development 2.0) is characterised by massive online collaboration, self-organisation, open-source marketing, collective intelligence and crowd sourcing (Jansen, 2009) and aimed at achieving development goals (Kirstein Junge, 2012). The findings also reveal the use of crowdsourcing. Crowdsourcing is used to create and increase collective knowledge, community building, collective creativity and innovation, crowd funding, cloud labour and civic engagement (Bott and Young, 2012, Esposti, 2012). Bott and Young (2012) identify that crowdsourcing is not only limited to industrialised countries but already has a strong impact in developing countries. This is being confirmed by the practice of the NGOs that have been analysed. Waters et al. (2009a) argue that non-profit organisations lag behind others in social media adoption, waiting to see how others use this new technology. In general that may be true but the front runners of the development organisations do adopt the latest social media but are not always sure what to do with it, see for example case D in the findings where there is room for experimenting. Intensive collaboration and knowledge sharing with regard to social media use was observed among some of the examined development organisations. This agrees with Ballantyne and Addison (2000) and Ferguson et al. (2013). The finding that room for experimenting with social media is present in the analysed cases agrees with the views of Kanter and Allison (2010).

5.3 Potential Disadvantages

Kanter and Fine (2010) explain that non-profit organisation frequently create "fortresses" and dread what is shared to the general public. Yet, they argue that to be a 'networked non-profit' organisation one must become transparent and welcome the opinions and feedback coming from the outside they argue. (Kanter and Fine, 2010). The barrier of communicating a complex message is identified by Mefalopulos (2008) in the context of development communication. He advises that *"Effective messages are those that have the information packaged in a clear and easily understandable manner, contain the right appeal to get the audience's attention, and fill the gap between what the audience knows and what they need to know."* The resistance of staff to change working habits is identified by Mefalopulos (2008) and Kanter and Fine (2010).

6   Conclusion & Further Research

Returning to research question "How do Dutch NGOs perceive the opportunities and pitfalls of social media as a tool for their development projects?" the findings of this pilot study provide an emerging theory of social media use by these NGOs in the context of international development.

From the preliminary framework of emerging themes diagram (Figure 2) it becomes apparent that potential disadvantages associated with social media use may impede the organisational use, whereas the

identified potential organisational uses of social media may motivate use and adapting the social media for a development context. On its turn the use in a development münster context may reveal potential disadvantages, whereas potential disadvantages may influence the use or non-use of social media for particular developmental activities, hence a bidirectional interaction between these themes.

Future research will collect more data along these theoretical concepts, over a broader range of cases in order to build a deeper theory of wider scope, using theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1978). Sustainable development is a challenge for NGOs. Social media may leverage inclusiveness and sustainability in development projects.
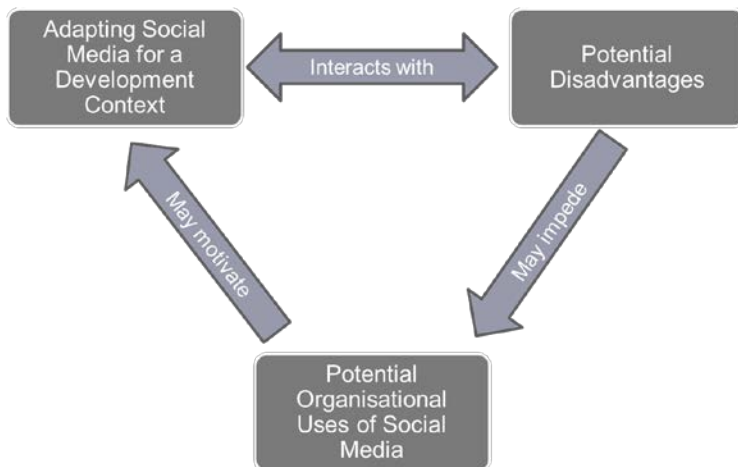

Figure 2.   *Preliminary framework of emerging themes Social Media and Development NGOs.*

As follow-up to this research the nature of NGOs related to their social media activities to may be further investigated. An interesting classification of NGOs along their historic advance has been suggested by Korten (1987). The classification scheme includes the following typologies of NGOs (originally seen as sequential generations of NGOs): emergency assistance, development, development as self-reliant political process, human and sustainable development and development beyond aid oriented NGOs. This classification is based on synthesis of ideas from Korten (1987), Korten (1990), Senillosa (1998), Bendell and Murphy (1999) and Fowler (2000). Considering this classification of the development strategies used by NGOs, and how social media supports those strategies, will add a useful perspective to this research. It may be that social media use in these organisations spans a number of these development activities.

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