Role of Social Media and Computing in Organizations Aiding Asylum Seekers and Undocumented Migrants in the United States

Deepika Rama Subramanian

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Tanushree Mitra, Chair
Andrey Esakia
Rebecca Hester

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(ABSTRACT)

Every year, an increasing number of displaced people arrive at the United States of America's border to request asylum. Several groups are working to help migrants by providing them with essential items and services, housing, and legal advice. Drawing on ethnographic findings, this work presents a situated perspective of how citizen responders utilize technological systems to provide relief to those affected by the immigration crisis. Often, these citizens with common goals come together to form organizations. This study investigates how social media and technology support on-the-ground work, advocacy work, care-work, and invisible work of these organizations. Further, I highlight how technological systems fail organizations and how the emergence of care-work replaced these systems. Finally, I make design recommendations to social media and technological systems' design to boost the efficacy of collective crisis response by citizens.

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Every year, an increasing number of displaced people arrive at the United States of America's border to request asylum. Several groups are working to help migrants by providing them with essential items and services, housing, and legal advice. Drawing on ethnographic findings, this work presents a situated perspective of how citizen responders utilize technological systems to provide relief to those affected by the immigration crisis. Often, these citizens with common goals come together to form organizations. This study investigates how social media and technology support on-the-ground work, advocacy work, care-work, and invisible work of these organizations. Further, I highlight how technological systems fail organizations and how the emergence of care-work replaced these systems. Finally, I make design recommendations to social media and technological systems' design to boost the efficacy of collective crisis response by citizens.

Dedication

To my late grandfather, K.Ganesan, for the progressive, compassionate man he was. He believed that every human being was entitled to a roof over their head and bread on their plate. I am grateful to have been influenced by his thoughts and beliefs.
&
To my parents, Ravi and Kalyani, for their unconditional love and support.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the year 2016[1], over 73081 people filed for asylum at the United States with just over 20,000 individuals receiving asylum. The number of individuals requesting asylum and the number of individuals being granted asylum is constantly rising. According to a Pew Research report, in 2017[2], the United States granted asylum to 26568 persons[64]. In addition, as of 2017, there were 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States[64]. This is in-part due to the increase in immigration from the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salavador, Honduras and Guatemala) owing to the high homicide rates, gang activity and violence in these countries[33]. This has resulted in a unique crisis situation in the United States with several migrants from not only central America but also around the world arriving at the borders with, often, no food or money. The number of other migrants who illegally entered the United States fleeing similar situations of food insecurity or violence either now or in the past is also growing. Several grassroots and established groups (non-profit organizations) have stepped up to help these migrants in the country. These groups/organizations use technology and social media (henceforth referred to as group(s)/organization(s)) for a number of purposes such as co-ordination, outreach, advocacy, and fundraising.

The domain of Crisis Informatics is rich with studies that explore the role of social media in various crisis situations [100, 101, 106, 119, 128, 147]. Most of the crisis situations in these studies are natural disasters, mass shooting events, or other breakdowns of civil infrastructure. These events may significantly affect society but once the crisis situation passes, the response becomes uncomplicated[51]. However, the migration crisis in the US is a much more protracted event. This crisis has also been exacerbated by several policy changes such as the Zero Tolerance Immigration Prosecutions Policy[97] and the Migration Protection Protocol[96]. Through my interviews, I found that each of these exacerbations manifested as its own crisis event triggering a response similar to post-disaster socially integrative responses[42, 103]. While there are responses similar to the traditional post-disaster ones such as gathering of critical resources and distribution among the affected, other unconventional responses such as protesting the policy changes and petitioning lawmakers are also triggered.

I study this unique crisis situation and how social media and technology empowers organizations that support undocumented migrants, asylum seekers and refugees (collectively

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[1]latest available data for claims filed
[2]latest available data for asylum granted

referred to as migrants hereafter). Much of the study in Crisis Informatics depends heavily on what social media makes visible [149]. Kow et al.[74] and Dailey et al.[22] talk about how the knowledge of the events that occur outside of the eye of the public digital records can provide a better account of the crisis. In line with this, in this study, I also explore the invisible work that is performed by volunteers and members of organizations. Along with this invisible work, we also highlight the care-work that is performed by the volunteers/members of organizations. Highlighting the invisible work and care-work performed by organizations is import to better understanding how to design technological systems that support that.

Responses to disaster scenarios not only demand resources but also money. Many studies[39, 43, 48, 115, 116, 132] have dealt with fundraising for non-profit organizations. Since traditional fundraising methods of charity events, direct mail and calling campaigns are very expensive more and more non-profit organizations have chosen to crowdfund online [116]. In this study, I also examined the ways in which organizations utilized crowdfunding systems, social media and other technological framework to raise funds for their organization. Specifically, I investigated how these organizations designed their fundraising appeals with a focus on storytelling as a way to raise funds.

To summarize, I began this study seeking answers to the following research questions:

- RQ1: What are the ways in which organizations helping migrants in the US? What acts of care and invisible work can be observed in the work of organizations?

- RQ2: How are social media and technological systems helping organizations in their day-to-day and advocacy efforts?

- RQ3: How are social media and technological systems helping organizations raise funds? What role does storytelling have in organizations' fundraising efforts?

This research offers a situated account of crisis response efforts organized informally(grassroots organizations) and formalized(established non-profits) response efforts across online and offline spaces. I highlight the limitation of social media especially considering the largely older demographic of volunteers and members of organizations. In addition, I adopt care as defined as Wong-Villacres et al.[149] and invisible work as defined by Star et al.[126] as analytical lenses to provide design recommendations for expanding the capacity of social media to support this response. This study also deepens the understanding of sociomateriality of care that appears in the crisis relief landscape as I investigate their the engagement of people and their effort to manage resource mobilizations. Finally, this study expands on existing research of the virtues of storytelling particularly through social media in inspiring empathy, sympathy and other emotions in people. In turn, I also explore how organizations are currently employing these emotions to raise funds for the organization.

In the rest of this chapter, I present a brief history of seeking asylum in the US, undocumented migration to the US and the policies that have shaped this migration. I also present a glossary of commonly used terms in the rest of this thesis for the reader's convenience.

1.1   A History of Seeking Asylum & Undocumented Migrants in the United States

Immigrants and immigration has been an integral part of United States history since time immemorial[54]. Migration to the US from the Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA) is not a new phenomena however the reasons behind the migration has changed. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reported the increase in 'organized crime, record high homicide rates, sexual violence, disappearances, forced recruitment to gangs and extortion'[136]. According to the UNHCR report, the migrant crisis peaked in 2014 and attracted a significant increase in the US assistance to the region. However, in 2016 there was a second surge in migration especially of unaccompanied minors.

These migrants arrive at the US border to request asylum. Asylum is a form of protection granted to individuals who can establish that they are unable or unwilling to return to their country because of persecution or fear of persecution on the account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion. A migrant can seek asylum in two ways:

- Affirmative Asylum: Individuals are able to seek asylum through this method if they are physically present in the US, regardless of how they entered within one year after their arrival. They can also apply for asylum at ports of entry such as the border or at airports. If the individual's asylum claim is denied and they are referred for removal from the US, they may utilize the defensive asylum procedure to renew their request of asylum.

- Defensive Asylum: Individuals can seek asylum through this method as a defense against the removal after they are apprehended without a visa in the US or at one of the ports of entry. In this type of request, the individual requests asylum at an immigration court where an immigration judge (from the Department of Justice) presides over the case of whether the applicant will be granted asylum or not.

People who request asylum are referred for a 'credible fear screening' interview conducted by an asylum officer. This interview provides the applicant with an opportunity to explain how they have been persecuted or has a well-founded fear of persecuted. Based on the interview, the officer will determine whether the applicant has a 'significant possibility' of being eligible for asylum. If the individual is eligible for asylum, the officer refers them to immigration court (in case of a defensive asylum proceeding). If not, the applicant will be deported from the US and could seek review by an immigration judge to appeal the decision by the asylum officer. This process could take between 6 months and several years. The 'Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act' requires all individuals seeking asylum at ports of entry to be be detained. They could remain in detention even after their 'credible fear interview' confirms their fears are credible. If officials feel that the applicants are unlikely to flee and are not a safety threat, they are released. To be released, the asylum seekers must pay a bail which they oftentimes cannot afford. In addition, in some cases, released

asylum seekers can be monitored by GPS ankle bracelets that they must pay for. In the past, immigration authorities released many migrants while their cases were still pending in immigration court (i.e., after successfully clearing their credible fear interviews). However, under the Trump administration, the policies were modified to release as few asylum seekers as possible. In the next section, I detail the policy changes that were made to stem the flow of migrants into the United States[41].

1.2 Policies affecting the Immigration Crisis in the US

In this section, I describe the policy changes that were implemented in recent times that affect migrants in the US[19].

1.2.1 Metering and Asylum Turn-backs

Since asylum seeking families began arriving in large numbers, immigration officials informed them that they may seek asylum as ports of entry rather than cross the border between ports of entry and then seek asylum. Simultaneously, the administration also effectively blocked off the ports of entry to the asylum seekers through a practice called "metering" (queue management). Under this practice, the US Customs and Border Protection restricts the number of people who are permitted to request asylum each day at the entry ports. This means that asylum seekers are turned back and forced to wait for months in Mexico for an opportunity to access the asylum process.

1.2.2 Migrant Protection Protocol

In December 2018, the Trump administration created a new program called the Migration Protection Protocol (dubbed as 'Remain in Mexico'). Under this program, people who seek asylum at the southern border are given notices to appear in immigration court and asked to return to Mexico. They are instructed to appear at a particular port of entry at a specific time and date for their hearing. Individuals sent back to Mexico are currently housed in a make-shift shelter along the Rio-Grande river.

1.2.3 Zero Tolerance Immigration Enforcement Policy

In May 2018, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that they would adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards anyone caught crossing into the US by Border Patrol. This policy was dubbed the "Family Separation Policy" and quickly overturned by the President two months later. However, there are several reports that families are still being affected by this policy[8, 49, 141, 141]. Any immigrants crossing the border without permission, even if they were seeking asylum, would be referred to the DOJ and prosecuted for the misdemeanor of illegal entry [15, 77]. The undocumented asylum seekers were imprisoned and any minors accompanying them were

entrusted to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The HHS moved the minors away from their parents/guardians across 100 Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) shelters. In the past, these families generally paroled in the country to await their cases or detained together.

1.2.4 Asylum Transit Ban

In July 16 2019, the Trump administration banned asylum for individuals who enter the US at the southern land border after passing through other countries after leaving their origin. It applies to everyone who cross after the date regardless of their immigration status and how they enter. There are exceptions for "severe form of trafficking" but no exceptions for even unaccompanied children. This ban was blocked by a Court of Appeals [20].

1.3 Glossary

- Non-Profit Organization: a type of organization that is dedicated to advancing a particular social cause or advocating for a shared view.

- Grassroots Organization: a type of organization is created as a collective action from a local level to effect change at a local, regional, national or international level.

- Emergent Organization: Organizations that lack formal structure working. They work towards crisis relief but with no formal training. For example, grassroots organizations are emergent organizations.

- Extending Organization: Organizations that already have a formal structure. They work towards crisis relief but with no formal training. For example, non-profit organizations and faith-based organizations are emergent organizations.

- Immigrant: a person who comes to live in a foreign country permanently.

- Asylum Seeker: a person who seeks refuge in a foreign country for persecution or fear of persecution on the account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion.

- Undocumented Migrant: a person who enters a foreign country illegally (without a valid visa) or the continued residence of a person after the expiration (or invalidation) of a visa

- Migrant Protection Protocol: a policy implemented by the Trump administration in the US that forces migrants who seek asylum to wait in Mexico (oftentimes in make-shift camps) until they are granted asylum. More details can be found in Section 1.2.2

- Family Separation Crisis: the crisis that resulted after a policy implemented (and overturned) by the Trump administration in the US that detains families and their

children separately. More details can be found in Section 1.2.3

- Zero Tolerance policy: a policy implemented by the Trump administration in the US that resulted in the prosecution for misdemeanor of migrants crossing the border illegally even to claim asylum. More details can be found in Section 1.2.3

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

My work extends from prior work in several domains namely social media and crisis informatics, narrative empathy and care work. In this section, I present a review of the literature that advised and guided this work highlighting their similarities and divergences.

2.1   Tools and Technology in Crisis Relief Situations

Social media has become increasingly ubiquitous in citizen responses in times of crisis and disruption[22, 125]. Studies in this area has established that social media supports citizens in crisis response in various ways such as relevant information exchange[70, 99, 106], organizing relief efforts[128, 134] and providing updates to fellow citizens[139, 140]. In addition, most of these studies focus on information exchange that takes place on a few platforms - mainly Facebook and Twitter[113, 127, 128, 140, 147]. For example, Starbird et al.[128] studied how volunteers used Twitter to self-organize and exchange information in response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake. Similarly, other studies[106, 113, 127] have also examined the distributed coordination efforts by digital humanitarians, people of the ground and rescue services. These studies show how social media shapes the citizen-led responses to crisis events such as mass shooting events, natural disasters and other breakdowns of social infrastructure. On comparing the nature of these events to the immigration crisis on a temporal basis, the immigration crises (such as the European Migration Crisis) tend to be more prolonged. Even though disaster events impact society greatly, after the event, the response becomes more straightforward[51]. Hellman et al. suggest that even if there are ripples, once the 'event at the core of the disaster' is over and makes it easier to assess damage and coordinate relief. However, in case of the immigration crisis planning relief and response tends to be more complicated. The immigration crisis is not only protracted but also subject to sudden and unexpected policy changes such as the Family Separation Crisis(see Section 1.3) or the Migration Protection Protocol(see Section 1.3) that can suddenly plunge migrants into danger and uncertainty. Therefore, organizations are required to improvise as the crises evolve. In turn, social media platforms and technology continue to support their work. I contribute to the existing area of crisis informatics by exploring a unique and constantly evolving crisis situation.

Some of research in the Crisis Informatics area also examines the role of the offline context that shapes the use of social media[21, 22, 74, 146, 147]. This research examines not only

on the online relief activity but also on the offline events and activities that influence it. Wong-Villacres et al. in their study[149] study how citizens have 'straddled' offline-online boundaries when they are involved in post-disaster humanitarian logistics. This study brings to light the offline factors that should, ideally, shape the online response through social media and technology. For example, this would entail examining how social media is supporting specific relief activies such as managing emergencies, coordinating distributed relief activity, and devising contingency plans. Wong-Villacres et al. explore the way ordinary citizens with no training navigate the online-offline boundaries of post-disaster humanitarian logistics. Dailey et al.[22] work on community responders revealed that they depended on 'real simple' technology and 'face-to-face' communications.

Since different studies have focused on specific platforms, I study the multiplex approach which organizations take in responding to crisis situations paying particular attention to the interplay between various platforms and offline communication.

2.1.1 Public Participation in Crisis Response

Citizens are the true first responders in a crisis [100]. Even though they are not formly trained in crisis response, they are the first line of responders who administer first aid and transfer victims to hospitals. Previous research has shown that even after rescue moves from an unofficial to an official one, citizens still participate in relief work in any way they can. They provide shelter, food, employment and transportation [2]. Among the citizens who respond, some converge forming groups with a collective goals. They are called extending (such as churches, NGOs) and emergent (grassroots) organizations[32, 107]. Since most of the citizens are untrained, they follow a 'learn-by-doing model of coordinated problem solving' approach to relief work especially those of post-disaster humanitarian logistics [81, 94]. However, any citizen-led response has been customarily plagued by convergent behaviour. Convergent behave is the "the informal, spontaneous movement of people, messages, and supplies towards the disaster area"[31, 42, 149]. The management of the supplies and equipment sent to crisis sites (called material convergence) is a complicated endeavour [42]. This is because the materials that are donated could be useless or useless in the quantities delivered. In addition, the logistician also needs to be cognizant of the available space and resources to help as many people as they can[55, 56].

Previous research in the areas of humanitarian logistics and collective behaviour in disaster response has covered the motivations of citizen-led groups[79], the challenges they face while doing so[24, 56] and how they exploit their social networks[55, 81] while responding to a crisis situation. There is, however, a paucity in technological solutions that are designed for supporting emergent humanitarian logistics work [149]. Existing solutions such as The National Donations Management Network program that was proposed has been rarely used[57] or have been designed for emergency personnel[105, 110]. This study contributes to the design of crisis management technologies for extending (non-profit) and emergent (grassroots) organizations focusing on humanitarian logistics (see more in Section 4.1).

2.2 Sociomateriality of Care

Care is a key motivator for repairing behaviour of self-organized citizens[29, 79]. I use ethos of care as a lens to interpret the response to the immigration crisis by emergent and extending organizations. There are several existing theories of care in ethics[40, 72] as well as in Science and Technology Studies[25, 149]. In addition, literature on care signals that care can be directed towards both living and non-living things[61, 133].

Bellacasa [25] believes that care is inspired by neglected things or the perception that something is neglected. In turn, Fisher et al. suggest that care brings about mending actions leading to a result or mediation that people engage in to make our world as 'livable as possible'[40, 91, 135]. Other authors highlight that care is collective engagement or "a matter of various hands working together"[72, 90]. In addition, other authors believe that care is an ongoing process of 'cognition and recognition' [23, 52]. Drawing on these previous theories, Wong-Villacres et al. defines care as 'ongoing interactions among the different actors of the crisis landscape (ad hoc logisticians, victims, and non-affected citizens), social media, supplies, and the sites themselves, that take place when the crisis landscape is perceived as being neglected or becoming more vulnerable, aiming to improve the conditions of said landscape'. In this study, we use this definition of care proposed by Wong-Villacres et al.[149] alongside some elements from Bellacasa's[25] theory of neglected things. As mentioned previously, care can be directed at non-living entities also. For example, Houston et al.[61] points out the care mediated by materials such as software and hardware tools on the repair of mobile devices. This research extends this research by highlighting the aspects of material-mediated technology-mediated care in aiding migrants in various spaces(see Section 4.1).

2.3 Storytelling and Narrative Theory

"Storytelling is one of the oldest methods of communication and learning" [93]. Good stories help build connections and are easily remembered [111, 118]. Therefore, storytelling has been used in advocacy for a long time[143]. Stories are used strategically by organizations because of their ability to create a "collective identity and movement issue framing". Keen [69] in their theory of 'Narrative Empathy' indicated that storytelling could evoke empathy and sympathy in the mind of the reader through character identification. Character identification happens when the reader puts themselves 'in the shoes' of the character. Keen states that character identification can happen even when the character and the reader are different in all practical ways. Digital technology has changed the way stories are collected, shared and consumed. Digital storytelling uses mixed media (video, audio, images and text) to recount stories. Several studies have focused specifically on digital storytelling[10, 11, 28, 73, 87, 93]. These stories are used to empower marginalized communities and underrepresented population such as refugees[114], women[28, 87, 93], elderly people[93], autistic children[10, 11] etc. Clarke et al. in [18] shows how digital narratives that are created by marginalized communities

and vulnerable populations is a 'cathartic and therapeutic' tool that promotes cross-cultural understanding. It also brings to light the lived experience of many others who lived through trauma. For example, Dimond et al. studied the platform 'Hollaback!' that provided a voice to people who were affected by street harassment[28]. They found that storytelling, even online, was able to provide victims with an avenue to understand and come to terms with their experience. Similarly, Michie et al. study the role of storytelling in changing the narrative towards abortion in Ireland [87]. By bringing critical conversations around abortion to the forefront, this work shows that storytelling can reject false narratives and show people the reality of the abortion laws in Ireland. In both cases, the studies aimed to bringing social change through the power of storytelling. However, these stories are largely recounted by the victims of societal injustices and vices. Undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, who are a marginalized population, are hesitant to bring forth their stories. In addition, while there platforms that support digital storytelling for displaced populations [114], these tend to be limited to refugees (for the difference between refugees and asylees, please see Section 1.3). In this study, I study how stories are currently being used for advocacy in emergent and extending organizations supporting migrants. I also discuss how organizations could be telling stories, how these could empower undocumented migrants and help them better assimilate into their new lives.

2.4 Crowdfunding in Non-Profit and Grassroots Organization

Fundraising is an important activity for emergent and established movements alike to keep growing. Traditional fundraising methods involves door-to-door or face-to-face canvassing, charity balls and benefit events, phone canvassing, direct mail, etc. However, these methods have been found to be tedious and expensive[116]. With the widespread use of the internet and the social media boom, people are easier to reach [121]. For example, Saxton et al. found that the main phenomena that caused non-profit organizations to shift fundraising efforts to social media is the ability raise funds through crowdfunding, the ability to do peer-to-peer fundraising and the transparency that leads to social pressure to donate [116]. Organizations can accept even small donations from a large number of people with no overhead costs [39]. Because of the current technological infrastructure, individuals are able to fund raise for organizations that they are not a part of. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Captain Tom Moore (99-year-old) raised over $40 million to support health care workers[83] in the UK by walking 100 laps of his garden. This method of fundraising was then followed by others with Rajinder Singh (73-year-old), Daribul Choudhury (100-year-old) and Alfons Leempoels (103-year-old) doing their part in raising funds for health care organizations in their countries [7, 63]. Studies in the Human-Computer Interaction areas in crowdfunding have covered the factors and the language that pushes people to make donations in commercial crowdfunding network [43, 48, 88, 116]. However, it does not consider some of the factors that motivate individuals to give to philanthropic causes that does not

yield any monetary returns to the donor. In philanthropy studies, factors such as negative and positive appeals, emotions, empathy and sympathy that play a significant role in donor behaviour are considered [50, 67, 129, 150].

2.4.1 Online Fundraising

Online fundraising for non-profits have been widely studied in the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector studies. Since crowdfunding relies on the organizations' network for donations, the concept of social capital is pertinent [9]. Brown and Ferris [12] proposed that there are two forms of social capital - network and norms. In terms of crowdfunding's social capital, network indicates how involved an organization is with its community and the diversity of their support. Norms, in terms of crowdfunding's social capital, is the trust and involvement (on the part of the community or donors) in the organization. Graddy et al. found that social capital prompted donors to donate and also dictated the amount [46]. Prior studies have focused on how non-profit organizations utilize specific social media platforms for fundraising purposes [78, 115, 116, 117]. Non-profit organizations have found many creative ways to utilize social media to fundraise. For example, the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge that raised funds for Lou-Gehrig's disease in 2014 received donations amounting to $220 Million [130]. This challenge involved people filming themselves pouring ice cold water over themselves to raise money to fight the disease. This movement garnered major national attention inviting celebrities from many industries like Bill Gates, Leonardo Di Caprio, LeBron James and Justin Timberlake. Social media has primarily helped organizations reach out to their networks regarding their role through text, images and videos. Most recently, charities have begun to exploit the live streaming features on social media. This is an emerging method of fundraising online because of the low overhead costs and the ability to hold the attention of audience of longer periods of time to spread awareness about their cause [89].

Even though a lot of studies have dealt with non-profits use social media for fundraising, there is a dearth of literature covering nascent grassroots organizations doing the same. In this work, I study the ways in which emergent organizations supporting immigration reform and immigrants are utilizing social media for funds and resource mobilization and contrast them with extending organizations with the same function. Another key difference between existing research and this study is the focus on a single cause - immigration. This topic is highly partisan and often occludes the humanitarian crisis around the USA particularly on the US-Mexico border. Through this study, I learnt that many organizations (both extending and emergent organizations) are composed of older adults between the age of 50-75. This indicates a need for technological and social media systems for fundraising that are accessible and easy to use.

2.4.2 Factors Affecting in Philanthropic Giving

Emotional and rational processes both govern a potential donor's decision making process [26]. In a study by Piferi et al. Motivation to donate to charities stems from many factors

such of self-worth, feeling better about themselves, public attention to their goodwill and a relief from guilt [53]. In a study of the donations after the 9/11 attacks on the US, the main factors that drove donations were - alleviate one's own anguish, to display civic commitment, to display patriotism, knowing someone who was affected, the desire to supported in a similar situation and alleviating another person's anguish [104]. From a comprehensive review of literature, Bekkers et al. identified eight factors that drove philanthropic giving: awareness of need, solicitation, costs and benefits, altruism, reputation, psychological benefits, values, and efficacy. In this study, I find an interplay of several of these factors in the motivations of volunteers and donors.

Emotional Processes in Philanthropic Giving Two key questions drive rational giving: 1. Do the victims warrant assistance? and 2. How good are the results of any aid? [124]. Small in [124] suggests that studies [71] have found that there are violations of this rationality as people donated to specific causes serving one individual versus causes that affect a larger group individual. Small goes on to suggest that these irregularities are due to people's sympathy for individuals. Sympathy, in turn, is determined by several other factors such as similarity to the victims, proximity to the victims, if the victim is identifiable, if the person and victim have shared experience. Empathy, a semantically close relative to sympathy, was also posited to be one reason for altruistic behaviour in human beings [4]. However, several alternative theories [3, 104] that involving egoistic motivations to altruism have also been proposed in line with Bekkers et al.'s work [6].

Framing Appeals in Philanthropic Giving Studies mentioned in Section 2.4.2 shows that emotional processes play an important part in determining donor behaviour. Organizations tailor their appeals to prospective donors carefully to elicit emotions that could lead in increased donations [35, 50, 67, 150].

Researchers are still unclear on which of the moods - negative or positive is more suited to yielding donations[150]. One study has shown that a general good mood boost donations [1]. However, another study by Anik et. al shows that feeling sad about the particular situation of victims might also boost donations [76]. A third study[95]found that when only smaller donations are solicited, i.e., cost of helping is low, both negative and positive mood inductions encouraged more donations than neutral inductions did. When pictures are part of appeals, Small et. al in their work [123] establish that potential donors mirror the emotions that are visible on the faces of the victims. This emotional contagion is stronger when the victim and the viewer had the same group membership (for example: race, identity, nationality, religion) [145].

In order to elicit certain emotions in their prospective donors, organizations tend to carefully design their appeals, i.e., their requests for donations. In line with this, charity appeals generally tend to be of two types - negative and positive appeals. Negative appeals induce emotions like shame, guilt, fear, indignation and anger. They are also called guilt appeals [16, 50], loss-framed appeals [13, 17] or sad appeals [144]. Negative appeals coax people to donate by presenting them with abominable and disconcerting events that have happened
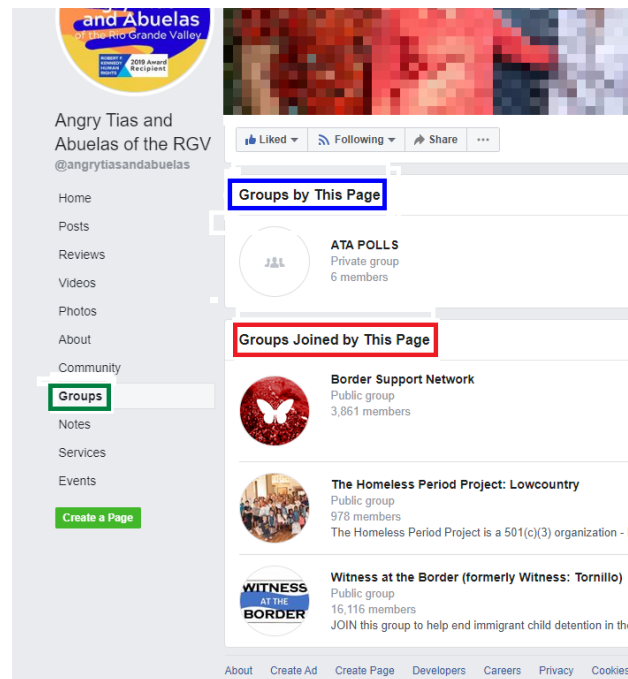
Figure 2.1: Facebook groups associated with Facebook Pages. In this image, the green box depicts the tab where these groups can be found. There are two ways Facebook Pages can be linked to groups - the blue box depicts the groups that are linked to or created by this page and the red box depicts groups that are joined by the page. Images courtesy of the *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV.*

and/or would happen to the beneficiaries without the support of the donors [35]. On the other hand, positive appeals induce emotions like hope and happiness for the improvement of the beneficiary's life. They are also called altruistic appeals [108], gain-framed appeals [17] or warmth appeals [50]. Positive appeals coax people to donate by presenting them with hopeful, gratifying events that have happened and/or would happen to the beneficiaries in the future with the support of the donors [35]. A recent study by Erlandsson et al. [35] finds that negative appeals had the same if not better effect on philanthropy than positive appeals. However, the same study also found that the attitude of the potential donor to that particular appeal played a role in donor behaviour. In this study, we aim to add to the existing literature on the appeals that emergent and extending organizations use to raise funds for the support of migrants in the US.
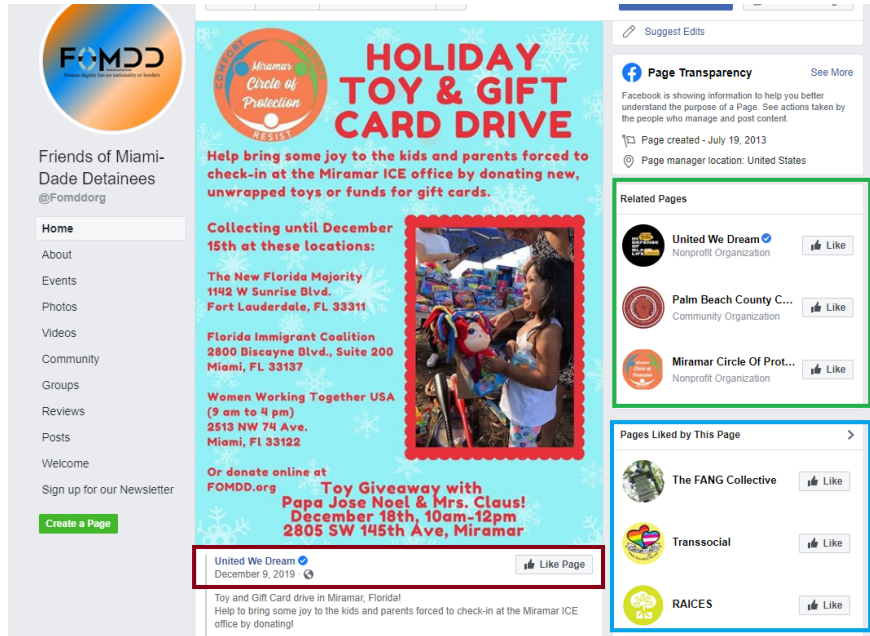
Figure 2.2: Other Facebook pages associated with Facebook Pages. There are three ways Facebook Pages can be linked to other pages - the maroon box depicts the post cross-posted from the 'United We Dream' page, the green box depicts related pages suggested to the user and the blue box depicts pages that are liked by the page. Images courtesy of the *Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees*.
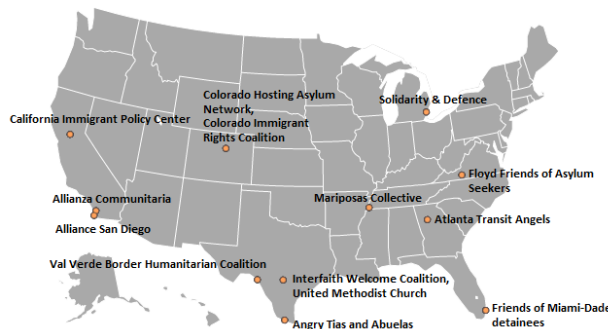
Figure 2.3: Participating organizations and their locations across the US
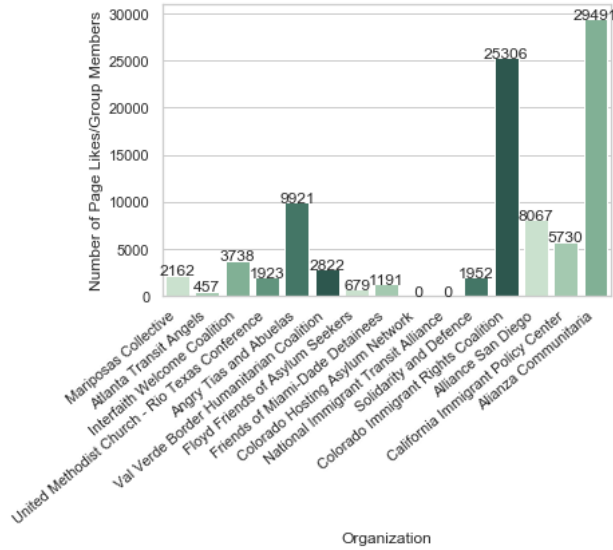
Figure 2.4: Organizations' presence on Facebook
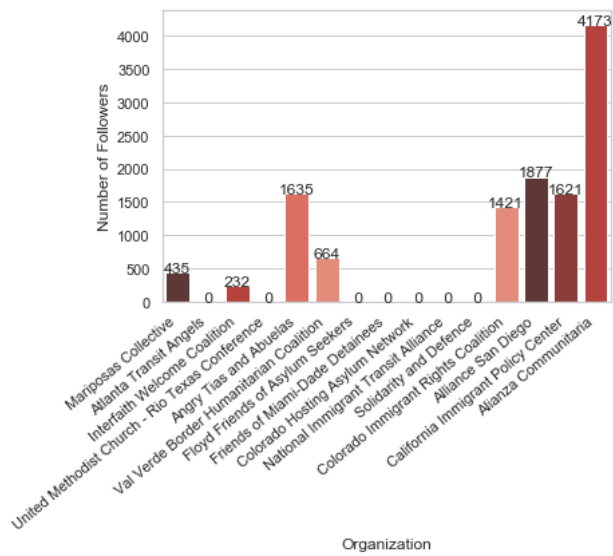
Figure 2.5: Organizations' presence on Instagram
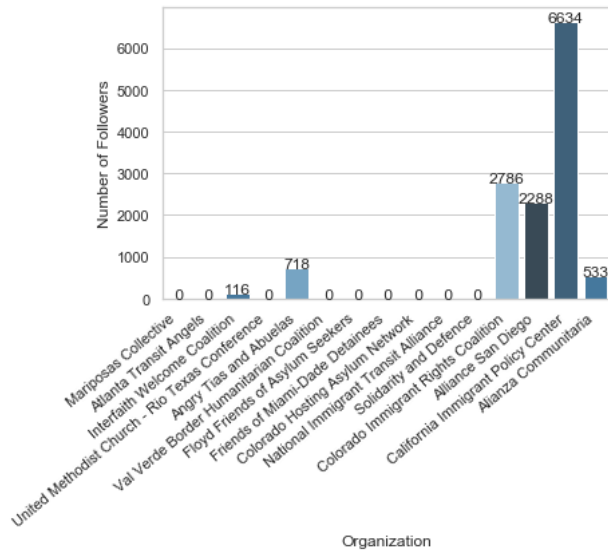
Figure 2.6: Organizations' presence on Twitter

Chapter 3

Methodology

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 19 volunteers/employees from 14 extending and emergent organizations that are supporting migrants across the United States.

3.1   Recruitment

All interviews were conducted with the approval of Virginia Tech's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I recruited participants by employing a combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling[45]. Convenience sampling [37] is a type of non-random sampling where members of the target population are easy to reach in terms of geography, availability or willingness to participate are recruited for a study. Snowball sampling [45] is a type of non-random sampling technique where existing participants of a study recruit other participants to the study.

I recruited participants for this study in two steps:

- I employed convenience sampling to identify organizations that are aiding asylum-seekers specifically at bus stations - this indicated that the organization was supporting asylum seekers who were not going to be settling in their area. I used search engines with keywords such as "bus station", "asylum-seekers" and "activism". The results were often from local news organizations that were covering the work of these groups.

- I used snowball sampling to identify other organizations that commonly associated with the organizations that I previously identified (in the previous step). This association could be that both organizations form a part of the same coalition or their website or social media pages refer to other organization.

- After interviews of participants who were recruited in the first round of sampling (through the two previous steps), I requested that they connect me to more individuals or organizations that would be interested in contributing to this research.

All the organizations that I contacted had a website or an official Facebook page or group. Several organizations' associations were mentioned on their websites. However, much of my search for organizations happened through Facebook. If a Facebook Page was found, I used the following features to find related organizations:

- Groups that are associated with the organization's page: A Facebook Page is permitted

Interviewee	Organization	Role
P1	Mariposas Collective	Coordinator & Care-Worker
P2	Atlanta Transit Angels	Leader & Care-Worker
P3	Atlanta Transit Angels	Leader & Coordinator
P4	Interfaith Welcome Coalition	Leader & Care-Worker
P5	United Methodist Church - Rio Texas Conference	Care-Worker
P6	Angry Tias and Abuelas	Founder & Care-Worker
P7	Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition	Leader & Care-Worker
P8	Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers	Founder & Care-Worker
P9	Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers	Care-Worker
P10	Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees	Founder & Care-Worker
P11	Angry Tias and Abuelas	Communications Specialist
P12	Colorado Hosting Asylum Network	Founder & Leader
P13	Solidarity & Defence	Care-Worker
P14	Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition	Communications Specialist
P15	National Immigrant Transit Alliance	Care-Worker
P16	Alliance San Diego	Care-Worker
P17	California Immigrant Policy Center	Communications Specialist
P18	Alianza Communitaria	Communications Specialist
P19	Alianza Communitaria	Coordinator

Table 3.1: Volunteers' characteristics. This table shows the list of participants in the study with their names anonymized, the organization they belong to and their role in the organization. Their roles have been presented in detail in Section 3.2

to link existing Facebook group to itself, create a new group linked to itself or join any other Facebook group. In order to view and access the groups associated to Facebook pages, one has to click on the page's menu on the left. This is depicted in Figure 2.1 by a green box. Organizations list two kinds of groups on their associated group's page:

- Groups that are created by the organization's page: Organizations are able to use their Facebook page to create linked Facebook groups to their pages. Often, these Facebook groups are private and are intended for volunteers or core members to conduct discussions. In Figure 2.1 this is marked by a blue box.

- Groups that the organization's page has joined: Organizations are able to join Facebook groups belonging to other organizations through their Facebook page. Organizations tend to join Facebook groups of other organizations that they are associated with or whose work they are intersted in. In Figure 2.1 this is marked by a red box.

- Related Pages: These are pages suggested to a user that are similar to the page they are currently looking at. It also considers location and popularity of these pages. Figure 2.2 shows the 'Related Pages' section of a Facebook page (of Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees) highlighted by a green box.

- Pages Liked by This Page: These are pages that are liked by the organization's page. It is shown on the right panel of the page. Figure 2.2 shows the 'Pages Liked by this Page' on the right highlighted by a blue box.

- Posts on the page that have been cross posted from another organization's group/page: These are posts that are shared from a different page onto the organization's page's feed. For example, Figure 2.2 shows a post shared from the 'United We Dream' page's feed. This is depicted by a maroon box in this figure.

If a Facebook Group was found, we used the following features to find related organizations:

- Suggested Groups

- Posts on the group that have been cross posted from another organization's group/page

Once organizations were identified, I cold emailed the organizations' contact that was provided either on their Facebook Group/Page or website. In case neither was available, I either messaged the organizations through Facebook or using the contact form on their website. I found it considerably challenging to recruit participants for this study for several reasons. First, most of this study's participants are volunteers at organizations while also managing full times jobs or graduate schools. Therefore, it was difficult to find an appropriate time to set up interviews. Next, interviewees who were full time employees at organizations were also unavailable. On many occasions, I was unable to recruit participants because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations became occupied with aiding migrants at detention centers and migrant camps. Despite these challenges, I received responses from 30% of the organizations that I contacted. I contacted a total of 60 with responses from 18 of them. 5

organizations were contacted as a resulted of snowball sampling from other organizations. 3 of the 18 organizations were unable to participate due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Participants

We recruited 19 participants from 15 organizations. These organizations were either grass-roots volunteer-run or NGO run by employees or members as previously mentioned in Section 1.3. The participants were involved in their organizations in the following capacities or roles:

- Founder: Participants in this category usually were the founders or one of the founding members of the organizations that they are part of. All of the founders who participated in my study were part of emergent organizations. These participants were able to give us data about the beginnings of the beginnings of their organization, how they first set up their social media and in what capacities the organization decided to respond to the immigration crisis. Following the establishment of their organizations, founders also took on other responsibilities in the organization. I interviewed 5 founders during this study.

- Leader: Participants in this category usually were leading their organizations as a chairperson or a board member. In addition, they were making big picture decisions for their organization involving their operations and finances. I interviewed 5 leaders during this study.

- Coordinator: Participants in this category are involved in ensuring the day-to-day operations of the organizations run seamlessly. These individuals often maintain master databases of volunteer lists, volunteer schedules and resource requirements. They are also in-charge of communicating with their counterparts from other organizations. I interviewed 3 coordinators during this study.

- Care-Worker: Participants in this category usually are involved in 'on-the-ground' volunteering with the migrants. They may work in any capacity ranging from putting together food packages, toiletry packages, bus station visitation runs, providing housing for the migrants or visitation at detention centers. Many participants from other categories have served at care-workers at some point during their volunteering or career. I interviewed 5 leaders during this study. I interviewed 12 care-workers during this study.

- Communications Specialists: Participants in this category usually are involved in managing their organization's communications with the public, the press and the policy-makers. Their most important job is to handle their organization's social media presence and email chains. In some cases, they formulate the organizations' social media strategy and explore new innovative ways to engage with their communities. I interviewed 3 communications specialists during this study.

Table 3.1 presents a list of participants along with the organization they belong to and their role within the organization. I found that the role a participant chose was subject to a lot of external factors such as their age, occupation and if they had children. They also found any way in which they could contribute to their organizations.

We obtained verbal consent from the participants who were interviewed over the phone and one written consent over email. Dimond et al. in their work determined that there was no significant difference in the unique qualitative codes obtained from both text-based and phone interviews [27]. Therefore, I allowed participation in the study through both mediums per the individuals' convenience. 19 participants participated through 17 Zoom interviews. A single interview was conducted for 2 interviews - P18 and P19 of Alianza Communitaria and 1 interview was conducted over email.

3.3   Organizations

In this study, it is important to focus on participating organizations as much as participating individuals as each organization has a unique modus operandi and contribution to the migrant community. In this section, I introduce the participating organizations, chronicle their contribution to the migrant community and detail their online presence including social media pages and websites. Organizations' locations and their presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are presented in Figures 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

Mariposas Collective: Mariposas Collective is an *emergent organization* supporting migrants out of Memphis, Tennessee founded in Fall 2018. This organization mainly aids asylum seekers at bus stations. In addition to this, they also provide remote support to organizations at the border, local migrants families and other organizations that are supporting them. I have presented detailed information about the nature of support provided at bus stations in Section 4.1.1. Mariposas Collective maintain social media presence through an active Facebook page[1] with 2162 likes and 2247 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a limited Instagram presence[2] with 435 followers.

Atlanta Transit Angels: Atlanta Transit Angels is an *emergent organization* supporting migrants out of Atlanta, Georgia. They are the Atlanta affiliate for the larger Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden organization (henceforth referred to as Grannies Respond). The Grannie Respond is a grassroots organization that was founded in Spring 2018 in response to the family separation crisis (explained in Section 1.3) by a group of grandmothers. 30 grannies who were part of the Grannies Respond/Abuelas Responden made a 2000 mile drive from New York City to McAllen, Texas picking up participants along the route after news of family separation broke in Spring 2018. Atlanta Transit Angels operate similarly to the Mariposas Collective in meeting buses at stations proving essentials. I have presented detailed information about the nature of support provided at bus stations in Section 4.1.1.

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[1]https://www.facebook.com/MariposasCollective/

[2]https://www.instagram.com/mariposascollective/

Recently, after the Migrant Protection Protocol (explained in Section 1.3) was implemented and the number of migrants to serve at bus stations dwindled, the Angels have been pivoting to work with local migrants to provide them with legal help and services. I have presented detailed information about legal services provided to migrants by organizations in Section 4.1.3. Atlanta Transit Angles maintain social media presence through an active Facebook page[3] with 457 likes and 493 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a private discussion group[4] with 80 members.

Interfaith Welcome Coalition: Interfaith Welcome Coalition is an *extending organization* based in San Antonio, Texas founded in Summer 2014. The Interfaith Welcome Coalition welcomes migrants at bus stations similar to the two preceding groups and sometimes even at airports. The organization provides essential items (more in Section 4.1.1 to the migrants. In their local community, they accompany asylum-seekers who are attending the Immigration Court showing solidarity and support. Interfaith Welcome Coalition maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[5] with 3738 likes and 3897 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a limited Instagram[6] and Twitter presence[7] with 232 and 116 followers respectively. They also maintained a website[8] detailing their work, story, mission, vision and avenues to volunteering.

United Methodist Church - Rio Texas Conference: The Rio- Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church is an *extending organization* founded in Winter 2018 based in San Antonio, Texas. This organization works in affiliation the Interfaith Welcome Coalition. The organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[9] with 1923 likes and 2079 follows at the time of this writing. This page is dedicated to several other causes in addition to aiding migrants in Texas such as community development, racial justice activism, and charity.

Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV: The Angry Tias and Abuelas is an *emergent organization* supporting migrants out of McAllen, Texas. The organization was founded in Summer 2018 in response to migration crisis at the US-Mexico border. McAllen, TX is the home to the largest ICE detention center in the USA [62] and is also located close to Matamoros in Mexico where many asylum-seekers are camped awaiting their immigration hearing. This organization caters to all of these crisis situations functioning at bus stations, the international bridge and the camps in Mexico providing essential products and services in situ. Section 4.1.1 provides further information about the nature of the services and products. The organization also provides legal help (explained further in Section 4.1.3 to individuals at the camps in Mexico. The organization maintains social media presence

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[3]https://www.facebook.com/AtlantaTransitAngels/

[4]https://www.facebook.com/groups/1964850010474073/

[5]https://www.facebook.com/MariposasCollective/

[6]https://www.instagram.com/texasiwc/

[7]https://twitter.com/texasiwc

[8]https://interfaithwelcomecoalition.org/

[9]https://www.facebook.com/RioTexas/

through an active Facebook page[10] with 9921 likes and 10446 followers at the time of this writing. They also have a private discussion group[11] for the core members. They also have a strong Instagram[12] and Twitter[13] presence with 1635 and 718 followers respectively. They also maintain a website[14] detailing their story, mission, vision, avenues to volunteering and latest campaigns in their area.

Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition: The Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition is an *extending organization* based in in Del Rio, Texas. The organization was founded in Spring 2019 in response to the volume of migrants being released from detention in their area. The group has a respite center where they provide migrants (only with families) with essentials and also perform bus runs (more in Section 4.1.1). The organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[15] with 2822 likes and 2874 followers at the time of this writing. They also have an Instagram presence[16] with 664 followers.They maintain a skeleton website[17] with basic information and a redirect to their Facebook page for news.

Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers: The Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers is an *emergent organization* based in Floyd, Virginia. The organization was founded in Winter, 2018 when the founder realized that buses carrying asylum-seekers passed through their area. This organization mainly provides bus-station based support providing migrants with essential food and supplies (more in Section 4.1.1. This organization recently started hosting asylum-seekers in the Floyd County providing the support they require for sustenance. A detailed account of how this organization helps migrants with housing in Floyd County is provided in Section 4.1.4. The organization maintains social media presence through a private active Facebook group[18] with 679 members at the time of this writing. The group also has a public page and group that are not actively used. They also maintain a skeleton website[19] detailing their work, story, mission and vision.

Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees: The Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees is an *emergent organization* supporting migrants in Miami, Florida. This organization was founded in Spring 2014. Their main function is to do detention center visitation as detailed in Section 4.1.2. In addition to visitation, their organization also performs advocacy activities by attending and holding rallies as specified in Section 4.1.5. This organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[20] with 1191 likes and 1280 follows at the time of

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[10]https://www.facebook.com/angrytiasandabuelas/
[11]https://www.facebook.com/groups/208093037057707/
[12]https://www.instagram.com/angrytias/
[13]https://twitter.com/AngryTiasRGV
[14]https://www.angrytiasandabuelas.com/
[15]https://www.facebook.com/VVBHC/
[16]https://www.instagram.com/vvbhcoalition/
[17]https://vvbhcoalition.com/
[18]https://www.facebook.com/groups/772313243146051/
[19]https://floydfriendsofasylumseekers.org/
[20]https://www.facebook.com/Fomddorg/

this writing. They also have a private discussion group[21] with 52 members.

Colorado Hosting Asylum Network: The Colorado Hosting Asylum Network is an *extending organization* that is based in Denver, Colorado. This organization supports local migrants through housing services. More details about how this organization supports housing in their area is provided in Section 4.1.4. This organization was founded in Spring 2020. This organization, as of this writing, has no social media or online presence.

Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition: The Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition is an *extending organization* that is a coalition of several smaller organizations across Colorado. This organization, based in Denver, supports immigrants in several ways - legal aid (more in Section 4.1.3, housing (more in Section 4.1.4, and advocacy 4.1.5. This organization maintains a social media presence through an active Facebook page[22] with 25306 likes and 26514 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a substantial Instagram[23] and Twitter following[24] with 1421 and 2786 followers respectively. They also maintain a very detailed website[25] that talks about their story, mission, vision, work and initiatives.

Solidarity and Defence: Solidarity and Defence is an *emergent organization* that is based in Detroit, Michigan. This organization is involved in bus-station based support as detailed in Section 4.1.1. In addition, they are also hugely involved in advocacy efforts in Detroit in support of the local immigrant community (more in Section 4.1.5). This organization maintains a social media presence through an active Facebook page[26] with 1952 likes and 2089 follows at the time of this writing. They maintain a skeletal website[27] with news and initiatives that they are involved in.

Alliance San Diego: Alliance San Diego is an *extending organization* based in San Diego, California. This organization is involved in several initiatives in their community one of which is immigrant support. Their primary mode of support is through advocacy (more in Section 4.1.5. This organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[28] with 8067 likes and 8428 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a strong Instagram[29] and Twitter[30] presence with 1877 and 2288 followers respectively. These pages are dedicated to several other causes in addition to aiding migrants in San Diego. They also maintain a very detailed website[31] that talks about their story, mission, vision, work and initiatives.

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[21]https://www.facebook.com/groups/227694177705695/

[22]https://www.facebook.com/coloradoimmigrant/

[23]https://www.instagram.com/co$_i$$mmigrant$/

[24]https://twitter.com/CIRCimmigrant

[25]http://coloradoimmigrant.org/

[26]https://www.facebook.com/solidarityndefense/

[27]https://solidarityndefense.net/

[28]https://www.facebook.com/AllianceSD/

[29]https://www.instagram.com/alliancesandiego/

[30]https://twitter.com/AllianceSnDiego

[31]https://www.alliancesd.org/

California Immigrant Policy Center: California Immigrant Policy Center is an *extending organization* based in Los Angeles, Sacremento and Oakland, California. This organization is also a coalition of several organizations in the state. They support immigrants in two main ways - legal aid (more in Section 4.1.3) and advocacy (more in Section 4.1.5). The organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[32] with 5730 likes and 6321 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a strong Instagram[33] and Twitter[34] presence with 1621 and 6634 followers respectively. They also maintain a very detailed website[35] that talks about their story, mission, vision, work and initiatives.

Alianza Communitaria: Alianza Communitaria is an *emergent organization* based in Escondido, California founded in 2012. Alianza Communitaria is the only organization that was involved in rapid response to immigration checkpoints, raids and law enforcement operation that target migrants in their area. More information on this is provided in Section **??**. This organization maintains social media presence through an active Facebook page[36] with 29491 likes and 30868 follows at the time of this writing. They also have a strong Instagram[37] and a small Twitter[38] presence with 4173 and 533 followers respectively. They also maintain website[39] in English and Spanish that talks about their story, mission, vision, work and initiatives.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

I conducted all the interviews over a period of 3 months. The interview protocol was focused on three wide areas reflecting the research questions namely:

- Understanding the day-to-day work of the participant, their role within the organization, the function of the organization

- Understanding the use of social media and technology for outreach, coordination and information exchange in the organizations

- Understand if and how the organizations use stories of the migrants for outreach and fundraising and the platforms and technology that support it

In order to formulate the questionnaire, I spent 3 months carefully observing how some of the organizations functioned as a passive member of the private groups of *The Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers* and *The Atlanta Transit Angels*. I also observed the public page of the *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV* during the same period. I have included the questionnaire

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[32]https://www.facebook.com/caimmigrant/

[33]https://www.instagram.com/caimmigrant/

[34]https://twitter.com/CALimmigrant

[35]https://www.caimmigrant.org/

[36]https://www.facebook.com/Alianza760/

[37]https://www.instagram.com/alianzacomunitaria/

[38]https://twitter.com/AlianzaComun

[39]http://alianzacomunitaria.org/

that was used to guide the interviews in Appendix A. Interviews lasted between 45 to 100 minutes. I recorded the audio interviews using the inbuilt feature on Zoom and transcribed them using Otter.ai[40]. Finally, I manually coded these interviews using QDA Miner Lite[41] to determine common themes.

I took an inductive, interpretative approach during the analysis of the interviews [86]. First, based on the interview questions and observation of the Facebook groups and pages of organization, I created a code-book. The first round of codes were high-level and lacked depth. Some examples from the code-book are: "Areas of Operation", "Functions of Organization", "Social Media Use", and "Storytelling Use". Then, I proceeded to code the interviews using this initial code-book. Simultaneously, I performed open coding, i.e., coding pertinent information in the interviews using a short phrase reflective of the information. The second round of coding yielded more fine-grained codes such as - "Social Media for Organizing", "Social Media use for Information Exchange", "Storytelling for Empathy", "Storytelling for Sympathy", "Storytelling Limitations: Content" and "Storytelling Limitations: Medium". After a third pass over the data, I was able to generate overarching themes of the advantages and limitations of social media and technology supporting care-work, invisible-work and advocacy-work in organizations. In addition, themes of organizations circumventing limitations in social media to serve their purpose also emerged.

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[40]https://otter.ai/

[41]https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware/

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Avenues to Helping Asylum Seekers

In order to provide a situated perspective of the crisis landscape, I queried organizations that I recruited about how and where they operated in aiding asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (henceforth referred to as migrants). I find that organizations intervene in several ways including providing them with essentials, legal advice and aid, housing and advocacy. In this section, I detail the various ways in which organizations function.

4.1.1 Essential Products and Services

One of the most common ways in which groups offer help to undocumented migrants and asylum seekers is through direct aid. Groups provide essential products such as food, water, over-the-counter medication, clothing, footwear, sanitary napkins and diapers directly to asylum seekers. These organizations function at various locations such as:

- Bus Stations: As migrants journey from detention centers to their sponsors across the country, they travel with little money and supplies. Often times, these migrants have not eaten for several days. Organizations provide relief at bus stations around the country forming a network that exchanges information regarding the migrants - how many are on the bus, how many men, women and children are travelling and if they have any medical requirements. Armed with this information, organizations bring bags packed with supplies - snack packs, water caches, clothing of appropriate sizes for the correct genders. Some organizations even prepare backpacks full of goodies for children and families that are distributed at the bus stations. 8 out of 15 organizations that I spoke to operated in the bus station.

    "Our whole function was meeting buses and, and serving hot meals serving hot soup and fruit and crackers and, serving many people a week." - P2

    "We provide, you know, like baby food and juices if available, but we have like a basics of food and water that we provide to everyone. In the winter, we provide clothing from socks to underwear to jackets all the way to coats and jackets, hats, gloves, scarves. We provide toiletries for adults and teenagers. We provide period pads, some over the counter basic medicine for cold and flu symptoms and stomach upset stomach and things like that. We provide shoelaces, belts, combs and hairbrushes. We provide diapers, diaper cream, baby products from baby

Figure 4.1: Snack packs. Images courtesy of the *Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers.*

> bottles to pacifiers to, like wet wipes for babies, we provide shoes of all sizes and I think that that's a good kind of like overview of what we provide right now. tote bags, you know traveling traveling bags as well we do." - P1

> "We would be able to provide the travelers with food with water with check to see if they need any medication, see if they were properly dressed, because this is now approaching winter and many of them are being Release in their shorts and T shirts. And they didn't have any appropriate clothing to be going to Massachusetts or Maine or wherever, where it's very cold. So we started taking coats and jackets and things like this as well as food." - P8

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are packets that are put together by organizations and distributed to all migrants that are passing through their town or city's bus station. Figure 4.3 shows some of the items that groups distribute particularly to migrant women such as female hygiene kits. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show some items such as backpacks, stationary, clothing and quilts that are typically distributed among migrants with families with young children.

- Across the border and at the bridges: Organizations closer to the border in states such as Texas often cross the border to the camps set up in Mexico for the migrants in order to provide aid. They also provide aid to the migrants who are waiting at the US-Mexico bridge over the Rio Grande river. The migrants here are provided with the same essentials as those that are provided in the bus stations. The camps themselves have communal kitchens and porta potties for the migrants' use. However,

Figure 4.2: Toiletries and Personal Hygiene Kits. Images courtesy of the *Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers* and *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV*.

Figure 4.3: Female Hygiene Kits. Images courtesy of the *Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition* and *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV.*

Figure 4.4: Stationery and backpacks distributed to children and families. Image courtesy of the *Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition.*

Figure 4.5: Clothing and bedding for children and families. Images courtesy of the *Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition, Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV* and the *Interfaith Welcome Coalition.*

Figure 4.6: Images from the refugee camp set up for migrants in Matamoros, Mexico. Images courtesy of the *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV.*

Figure 4.7: Supplies provided by organizations at the US-Mexico international border and bridge. Images courtesy of the *Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV.*

Figure 4.8: Food provided at the respite center of *Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition.*

because their stays could be indefinitely long, the migrants are also provided with some essential services such as doctors, psychologists, lawyers, prayer services, ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, and make-shift schooling. Only 1 out of the 15 organizations I spoke to operated across the international border and on the international bridge.

> "They are living in a camp in a park in Mexico. And this huge refugee camp has a bunch of tents where the asylum seekers are living and now there's all the different organizations, Angry Tias included, have helped set up different components of this refugee camp to make it livable. So they have porta potties and have some showers. There's a medical tent now, there's psychologists available. I believe five days a week, there is a really huge tent set up for like a dining area. I just went yesterday, I'm trying to think of everything that I saw. There's, um, 90 communal kitchens that are set up throughout the camp. And they're just small kitchens that the asylum seekers themselves made. There's a little school they call it La Escualita, which is a little school, that the kids go to, but as of April 1, I think, in a larger organization is going to come in to have school every day from nine to three. So the kids can go to school on a regular basis because now they only have four hours of school a week. This is run by volunteers,a professor from UT RGV goes over Sundays I think for three hours and then one or two more days out of the week for like one hour. There are also some religious organizations who go over and kind of provide service. So people can go and do their prayer and their religious services." - P6

Figure 4.6 shows some images of the current state of the Matamoros camp where asylum seekers await their immigration hearings before they are allowed to enter the United States due to the Migrant Protection Protocol also known as the Remain in Mexico protocol. Figure 4.7 shows images of some of the supplies that are taken across the border and at the bridge.

- Respite Centers: Organizations and charities often have a center where the migrants can rest, shower and find new clothing after their arduous journeys from their hometowns. These respite centers also sometimes have meals and places where people can stay overnight should their journey begin the following day. I found that these respite centers existed primarily in Texas in the Rio Grande Valley and Del Rio areas. 2 out of the 15 organizations currently operate respite centers at their locations.

  > "They were being dropped off at the bus station and sometimes they would go to Catholic Charities first and at Catholic Charities, they would get a meal, they would get a shower, they would get clothes for them to be ready for their journey to their sponsor families and sometimes they wouldn't get to visit the Catholic Charities respite center so they would just be dropped off at the bus station to pick up there to pick them to get their bus." - P6

  > "What the one the one experience that I will say really has stayed with me was when we were working at the respite center and McAllen and there were very, very large numbers of people coming through it was like 600 a day. And we were working in the closing room. Everybody got one outfit, so they can shower and get into a clean outfit. And there was a line of 30 people outside the golden door at any given time during the day. Um, we are doing the best we can to get as many people through as we could. But at the same time, you know, giving them a chance to choose what they wanted and making it a positive experience for them to take out their new outfit. And we were trying to make sure that family groups came came in the door together." - P3

  > "And then the other thing is showers we actually have a shower trailer. That is ours belongs to us now. And so that's the shower part. Meals we no longer have a cook trailer." - P7

  > "And then they partnered up with Catholic Charities across the street. And that's where the people if they had time before their bus, could take a shower and get a hot meal." - P11

  Figure 4.8 shows the food served at the Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition's respite center.

4.1.2 Visits to Detention Centers:

Organizations that are not present in the vicinity of detention centers across the country provide detention center visitation to the migrants. Oftentimes, they provide commissary money, money for their phone accounts and paperback books for detainees (undocumented migrants who have been detained). In addition, should the inmates require any assistance such as legal assistance or if they wanted to contact their families, the organizations did this for them. The volunteers who went to the detention centers and visited the detainees are called visitors. 2 out of 15 organizations do visitations at detention centers.

"We were getting lists from ICE about who wanted visits and then we would reach out to visitors and say - We need you to come in. We need (someone who speaks) this particular language. Then we would have to schedule the visits in advance with ICE. Our visitors would show up and have these visits.So that's part of our work - arranging the visits, arranging the visits, making sure they happen, and then acting on whatever information that the people we visit with may tell us. If they don't have an attorney, we refer them to a pro bono law clinic that will at least go out and look at their case. There are very few tangible things that we can do to someone in immigrant prison, other than send them paperback books, which has to be done through a publisher normally. So we do that through Amazon. Nothing is free in the immigrant detention center. So we put money on the phone accounts of everyone we visit. And then if they would like to particular book, we do that. We may follow up with their family, anything we can do to help them connect with the community and their family." - P10

"It's all it's all it's either money on phone money on commissary, or books that we bring in." - P10

"The other thing I add some days is that I go visit men in the detention centers over in Port Isabel and Raymond" - P11

Other interview subjects told us that organizations are also involved in conducting ESL (English as a Second Language) classes inside detention centers.

"I taught English inside the Aurora detention center for two years. I wrote my thesis on that." - P12

4.1.3   Legal Advice and Aid

Organizations are also involved in providing legal assistance to the migrants. One of the main issues facing the forced migrants is their lack of access to legal representation due to its high cost. With limited English proficiency and no knowledge of the complex US Immigration system, migrants who represent themselves often lose their cases and are deported[14]. If the migrants choose to represent themselves, the organizations help them prepare for their court date. These groups operate in the camps at the border, at detention centers and at the migrants' home where they wait for their court dates. All organizations that we spoke to provide legal support or connect the migrants they serve to other organizations that could provide this support.

"And we're working on other projects that have to do with helping asylum seekers working on things like legal advocacy and financial support and, and connecting them with with attorneys or if they're going to represent themselves pro se without a without an attorney." - P2

> "There's a group called RAICES and I don't know if you've come across them, but they're providing the legal support. And those folks that are involved with that, and I think they're on staff they come in and explain the rights of the migrants that they have just what they need to be attentive in terms of their court dates, etc." - P5

> "we also have those attorneys connecting with people that are in the detention center." - P5

> "Northern Colorado immigrant and Refugee Resource Center and the Rocky Mountain immigrant Advocacy Network provides direct legal assistance to people detained in the private immigrant detention center here in Colorado."- P14

4.1.4 Housing

I found that organizations sometimes provided short term or long term housing for migrants in their area.

I found two organizations in Colorado called Casa de Paz and Colorado Hosting Asylum Network that provide short-term and long-term housing respectively. Casa de Paz accepts migrants who are coming out of detention with no sponsors and provides them short term housing for 3 days. Following this, should the migrants required long-term housing, the Colorado Hosting Asylum Network provides them with this.

> "I joined Casa de Paz who provides short term housing for people released detention. Casa de Paz only house for three days. Most people who come out of detention are going to somebody, a relative or a friend or a boss or somebody. But there are a handful of people specifically asylum seekers who have nobody in the United States. And since when they're released, they cannot work and they own nothing and they know Nobody. We work with Casa de Paz to place people in long term housing up to a year." - P12

These organizations first identify a migrant detainee who is about to be paroled or released from detention and a volunteer who may be willing to take them in. The volunteer then visits the detention center to meet the detainee to see if they would be a good fit. Should they be, the volunteer outs together a team that would help them hosting the migrant detainee through legal advice, ESL, medical care, developing a social life, excursions or religious support.

> "And we go through Casa de Paz to date. So when they've identified a person, they let me know we have this person with this general history who is coming up for their final hearing and is eligible for parole or release. Do you have somebody and I'll send it out to my groups. Somebody will step forward and they'll say, I can do this. So that person then starts visitation in the detention center while they're still in detention. They can get to know each other and decide if they think it's going to be a good match. At that

point, if the person is released on parole, which is usually the case, they petition the judge that the host has petitioned for parole. The person is released to that person in the meantime while they're waiting because that takes about a month. They put together a team of five or six people or more. It's usually their friends, people at their church, people who are interested in being part of a team, but not necessarily hosting. So, once they do that, I start I do two trainings with the host and with the team until they're ready to go. And hopefully, by the time that person is released, we have a team ready to receive them." - P12

Another organization that I found hosting migrants was the Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers. They started housing migrants incidentally when a migrant reached out to the group while stranded in Roanoke, Virginia.

"He was scared and he was in Roanoke. So he called want to know there's anything we could do to help him and I said, Yes, I'll come and pick you up. So I picked him and his daughter up, and to our volunteer group asked if anybody had space to house them until we could find out where we can put them. So they could be safe and out of the elements. So that's how that got going. It wasn't exactly planned to do that. But that's how that ended up. And now we had a woman also come with a newborn child, and 12 more people that we just received last month. So it's been growing. And so far, thanks to the folks that are in our group have, you know, I say they're there. Instead of giving them a handout, we're giving them a hand up. So we're helping them to get up on their feet. And we've helped them with a wide range of needs. That's how we started helping people that were living in Floyd." - P8

The needs of the asylum seekers are met by members of the organization. All of the essentials required to set up a home such as bedding, utensils and furniture were posted to social media. The members of the organization who owned trucks transported them to the homes of the migrants.

"Now when we have asylum seekers now living in Floyd, they have needs specific needs. They need furniture, they need pots and pans they need whatever. Whatever bedding beds, cribs, whatever. So we post the needs and then whoever has items will online let us know that they've got this. And then other people would say they have a truck. So then we managed to coordinate people who have stuff with people who have trucks. To go pick it up and deliver it. And it just happens organically, that was not even necessarily planned. They just worked it out on their own. I just helped guide them and then I would be there when they would deliver them because I speak Spanish. So I was able to make sure that the right people got the right stuff. And it was actually, it was almost like poetry in motion. It was so beautiful to see. One day they had six different trucks come through to deliver stuff to the in one day, we had 12 people that arrived in Floyd. So and they all needed housing and stuff. So all these truckloads came to make sure that their needs were met, we still need even though they've been here almost a month." - P8

Only 2 out of the 15 organizations that I interviewed provided housing support in their areas.

4.1.5   Advocacy and Outreach

Advocacy, the public support and espousing of a cause, is a very important way that organizations support forced migrants in the United States. Oftentimes, policy and the law overlooks the undocumented migrants and legal asylum seekers. Organizations serve as the voice for these communities by rallying with them through phone campaigns, rallies and petitioning. For example, P14 was involved in a campaign that resulted in the reinstatement of state IDs and drivers licenses for undocumented migrants in Colorado.

> "One of our policy priorities over the last decade is Colorado's driver's license program. It was a legislation in the early 2000s that was passed that excluded undocumented immigrants from being able to receive state ID or driver's licenses. And so we were able to get that repealed and pass a bill that allowed undocumented folks to be able to access those driver's licenses." - P14

It also involves being actively connected with communities speaking about the injustices that are happening with undocumented migrants in the country. Every organization we spoke to were involved in advocacy and outreach through their social media pages. In order to have a solid reach to their communities, a few organizations had social media and offline engagement strategies which will be discussed in upcoming sections.

4.1.6   Summary

In this section, I detailed the ways in which organizations supported asylum seekers in the US. Please find a summary of my findings below:

- Organizations provide relief and aid to asylum seekers at four main areas: bus stations, respite centers, and across the US-Mexico border at asylum camps.

- Organizations pay visits to inmates at the immigration detention centers. Here, they are able to provide some essentials like commissary money, phone money or books for reading.

- Organizations provide short-term or long-term housing to migrants often relying on donations for procuring supplies for the homes

- Legal Aid and Advice is also provided to migrants in order to navigate the complex US laws and immigration process

- Organizations are also actively involved in advocacy work spreading the word about the injustices the migrants were facing. They are also involved in influencing policy decisions through conversations.

4.2 Organizing & Resource Mobilization by Organizations

One of the main functions of organizations is to provide essentials at various locations as elucidated in Section 4.1.1. Every day, volunteers either have to meet buses at the stations at specific times, go over the border to distribute aid at the camps in Mexico or on the US-Mexico bridges. Volunteers are also required to prepare the aid like toiletry packs or snack packs as seen in Figure 4.1 and 4.2. Each group has its own way of matching volunteers' schedules to shifts at the bus stations or at packing parties.

The most common means of communication within groups especially with respect to volunteer coordination happened through Facebook. 3 out of the 14 groups, namely Atlanta Transit Angels, Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers and Angry Tias and Abuelas used Facebook exclusively for scheduling and coordination with their volunteers. Mariposas Collective that did start out with using Facebook later moved to an application called Crew [1]. The Interfaith Welcome Coalition and its affiliated United Methodist Church - Rio Texas Conference (2/14 organizations) used Slack [2] to coordinate with their volunteers and schedule tasks. P7 from Val Verde Border Humanitarian Coalition told us that during the height of their work, they used an application called Team Reach [3]. As the number of asylum seekers dwindled and their work was limited, group texts took its place. In addition to the primary application used for coordination, groups also used calendars and spreadsheets. Some of the major findings from this are discussed in detail below.

4.2.1 Facebook

Facebook has been instrumental in the daily workings of 4 of the 14 organizations at some point. The Angry Tias and Abuelas primarily used Facebook's Messenger for coordination. Several group chats are created for specific purposes including one for volunteer planning.

> "The majority of our communication and planning happens through Facebook Messenger.We would kind of use the depending on what we were going to do, we would go back and forth on the chat groups. Um, whenever we vote on what to approve whatever money we're going to spend on a project or on some project or another. We vote only like in the Angry tias chat group. And then recently, we opened up another chat group, sometimes there's too many chat groups. I'm just to vote with that Facebook poll that they have. We use that a lot to vote on things. I'm just the eight of us. But yeah, I mean, the majority of our communication planning happens through Facebook chat. "- P4

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[1] https://www.home.crewapp.com/
[2] https://slack.com/
[3] https://www.teamreach.com/
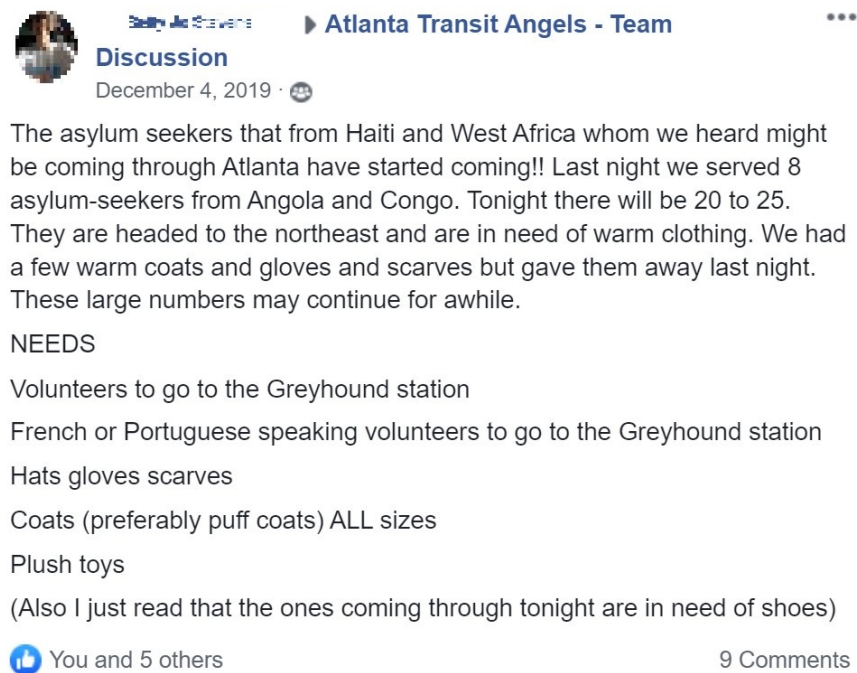
Figure 4.9: Call for volunteers and supplies on the private Facebook group of the *Atlanta Transit Angels.*

After posting a request for volunteers, they receive responses either through Facebook Messenger or through email.

> "They'll email us either to our yahoo email or they'll message us through Facebook. Or they'll message us through Instagram, but mostly through Facebook and email, um, and sometimes also at the bus station. They would just show up and asked to be put to work." - P4

Groups such as the Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers and the Atlanta Transit Angels have leveraged private Facebook groups to perform coordination. Volunteer requirements are posted to the group and members of the private group sign up for shifts with the organization in the comments section.

On the Floyd Friends Asylum Seekers' group, the volunteer sign up for a number of days was done simultaneously. This meant that the administrator first posted all the available dates and edited the post as people filled up the slots. This was a highly involved effort.

> "I generally will post a calendar information of dates that I'm going to be doing bus runs and if somebody wants to be a rider, to ride with me to meet the station and to Be able to hand out all this stuff." - P8

> "All they could do is when I do my post, they would see the dates that were there and they would tell me what day they wanted it Then I would go up and I would delete that date so that only the days that were free were, were shown." - P8

The Atlanta Transit Angels worked similarly posting call to volunteers on their private Facebook group and receiving the signs up through comments or personal messages to the administrator. Figure 4.9 shows an example post requesting volunteers and supplies to meet migrants at the Greyhound bus station.

> "Facebook is my like, my number one tool, although I mean, I think the effectiveness of that is waning." - P3

4.2.2   Slack

Interestingly, Slack which brands itself as a 'business' communication platform has been in active use in 2 organizations in Texas namely the Interfaith Welcome Coalition and its affiliated United Methodist Church - Rio Texas Conference. Slack's various channels are used for specific purposes such as to inform volunteers about the number of arrivals that are expected, volunteer sign ups, coordinators at the bus station and how many people have been helped so far. In addition to this, P5 also mentioned that Slack helps tie together relationships that are maintained across the border with Mexican relief organizations.

> "Um, we use slack. I'm not sure if you're familiar with it. Yeah. Okay. So we use slack to post, you know how many arrivals we're expecting, how many backpacks we've given out, you know, and other information to help communicate. " - P4

> "What the Interfaith Welcome Coalition is using is Slack, the program slack or an app, that application. And so with that, you know, there's different channels, and that's where, you know, they post the reports of how many families may be arriving at the bus station. How many volunteers are needed, there's coordinators for each day, that sort of thing. So slack is the primary means of communication through the Interfaith Welcome Coalition. I don't know what that looks like, at different points of the board. But because the interfaith welcome coalition reflects the San Antonio hub, and then it's connected to the different points of border over time, it started to now connect to those, those receiving agents or entities at the border. And so I would say slack is kind of tying all that together." - P5

4.2.3   Whatsapp, Signal & Messaging

For groups with a small number of members, messaging applications with end-to-end encryption such as Whatsapp and Signal were preferred. Given the history of ICE and Border Patrol atrocities against migrants who are a vulnerable population [34, 138], the use of an encrypted messaging systems are essential.

"We also use WhatsApp." - P10

"We did try to keep our WhatsApp channel, just for people who were part of the group." - P2

"We use WhatsApp, okay to communicate. So Facebook and WhatsApp are kind of our primary." - P3

"It was a group chat formed on a a encrypted app - signal.I don't know who formed it. But we all kind of just like came together and been using it just for security reasons" - P13

"I think another really critical platform that we use was signal which is an encrypted messaging app, which also becomes pretty critical when we're working with pretty vulnerable populations that are constantly being attacked, particularly thinking about the history of ICE agents coming onto Greyhound buses." - P15

"And now we are condensed and so it's very easy to do. Group text to the specific volunteers." - P7

4.2.4   Calendar

The calendar application was another piece of technology I found in use for organizing aid for the migrants. Time slots could be opened up for volunteers to sign up to on days they were available through the calendar making it an ideal choice for scheduling. However, I found that organizations, especially with older volunteers, discovered that it was not entirely straightforward to be used as P4 related to us.

"So we don't have people sign up themselves on Google Calendar just because we had times when I guess people had technology issues. A family looking at it and saying - Why are all these names on our calendar? They erased them all. " - P4

"yeah, we have volunteers that actually made a calendar to post it so that people could sign up on the calendar. But see, most of us are older people, when we were not raised with computers. And so many of them had trouble trying to figure out how to sign up online. It made for a very confusing situation for a lot of folks. So the calendar kind of went by the wayside." -P8

A calendar containing the names of several other volunteers could confuse users into thinking that someone had breached into their personal calendars. To remedy this, the Interfaith Welcome Coalition of which P4 is a part now makes their calendar read-only with access only to coordinators.

"We were sending out a weekly email update to our bus station volunteers. We have
the Google calendar for you know, signing up for volunteer times. We have daily
coordinators now at the bus station and airport. So we don't have people sign up
themselves on Google Calendar. So only our coordinators can, you know, edit it, but,
you know, everyone can see the calendar at least." - P4

As for the Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers of which P8 is a part, they used a different
technique - a text based post on Facebook as I mentioned in Section 4.2.1. This schedule
then went into a physical notebook.

"Okay, yeah, to do it manually for me works better. And then that way I don't my
calendar is a day planner. I actually have a notebook that has a calendar in it and
that's how I keep up with stuff. I know a lot of people do it online or do it on their
phone. I find that to be very frustrating. I put something that I thought I did. And
it turns out that I either delete something or that I posted on the wrong who knows
what. And so to me, it's better I put it in paper and pen and I know where it is. And
I don't lose it that way." -P8

4.2.5 Google Spreadsheets

The Atlanta Transit Angels' mode of operation is quite similar to that of Floyd Friends of
Asylum Seekers like I mentioned in Section 4.2.1. The administrators list open dates that
are available for volunteering and the volunteers sign up. The resulting schedule is stored
on a Google Spreadsheet and is handled by a dedicated administrator (P3).

"We set up a Google spreadsheet We have a coordinator, one woman who, who has
small children, and couldn't actually meet any buses, but very good at handling the
database" - P2

"Well, we've been using a a Google spreadsheet. A while I do think sign up genius. like
that or something wouldn't probably be better. The Google Spreadsheet just seems
to be the technology that our particular group feels most comfortable with. So we
decided to stick with that." - P3

4.2.6 Summary

In this section, I described the social media platforms and technology that helped organiza-
tions mobilize their resources and organize their volunteers. I have summarized the findings
from this section below:

- Facebook was the most commonly used platform for both organizing and mobilizing
  resources. Most commonly, calls for volunteers and resources were put out on organi-
  zations pages or groups. People who had the items or time to donate commented on
  the post expressing their interest in contributing.

- Slack was also commonly used in the Texas area to coordinate volunteers and resources. Interestingly, Slack was marketed as a business platform. However, organizations have utilized the features of Slack to serve their purpose. For example, they devoted each of the slack channels to a particular function in the organization such as transport, food, clothing, etc.

- Some organizations used simple technologies for their coordination. We typically found this in organizations that had a small number of volunteers and served a smaller group of migrants. The most commonly used messaging service was Whatsapp followed by Signal messenger. These services were preferred as they provided the user with end-to-end encryption.

- The calendar application was also in use as a way to sign up volunteers to time slots where volunteers were needed. However, the calendar application came with some issues among older adults. Many organizations found the calendar tricky to use often replacing the ability of users to sign themselves up with a coordinator who would do it for them. In other cases, the organization abandoned the use of the Calendar application altogether.

- Google Spreadsheets was also a commonly used system to keep track of volunteer schedules. This was usually maintained by a coordinator and viewable to the rest of the group.

4.3   Information Exchange between Organizations

As I mentioned in 4.1, one of the most common ways in which organizations serve migrants is through providing essential services at bus stations. Migrants who are travelling to their sponsors have had nothing to eat for as long as a few days as P7 pointed out:

> "They would not have eaten in several, you know, in a day and a half and they could really use food." - P7

Volunteers bring food, sometimes even freshly prepared hot meals, and water to the station where there is a long stop. In addition to this, they also sometimes bring clothing, footwear and toys or art supplies for children. Over the counter medication like painkillers, antipyretics, antiemetics and antidiarrheals are also brought to the station. The amount of food and medicine brought to the bus station would depend on the number of asylum seekers aboard the bus. Some generally identifiable information of the migrants may be useful to bring other supplies. It would also be essential to know if an migrant onboard is ill and does not have the money to purchase medications for themselves.

How do groups obtain information about the number of migrants on the bus and if there is a requirement for any specific medication? How do organizations know when to go to bus stations to welcome migrants? A lot of invisible work or articulation work [126], i.e., work

that happens behind-the-scenes to enable visible work is involved in matching the correct resources to the migrants.

In this section, I detail how organizations exchange information with other organizations in order to estimate the rate of flow of migrants at their location.

First, they rely on information from previous stations that the bus has passed through. This means that there is information exchange between major stations along the bus route. Origin stations that are located near the border sometimes even get information directly from ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) or Border Patrol. If this information is not available or not viable, the groups depend on previous data to estimate the number of asylum seekers that they could expect at the station.

4.3.1   Online exchange of information between stations to estimate migrants flow

The exchange of information between stations mainly happened through a private Facebook group called the National Immigrants Transit Alliance. Representatives of organizations from all around the US are part of this group. These members use the group to communicate the name of their stop, the number of asylum seekers they met at the station including specifics like the number of men, women and children to the rest of the group.

> "At one point we are like two members of the of the collective started connecting to other stations and create Facebook private group, which is the one we used to communicate with the other stations." - P1

> " And they do check for information from New Orleans and other teams about who's coming. And they may not go down to the station unless they know someone's coming." - P3

> "We have several contacts with groups at different bus stations. We used to contact you know someone in New Orleans or San Antonio and tell them to be on the lookout for so and so, um, you know, maybe they were going to need another, you know, some more Tylenol some more dramamine" - P6

> "We connected with the group of grandmothers from Memphis, Tennessee and from Knoxville, Tennessee. So we were tracking how many people would be on the bus to figure out how much food to take and to make. So that's how that got going." - P8

During our interviews, we discovered that all the communication between the groups didn't happen through Facebook. 1 group we spoke to did not have much information about the large network of organizations that were doing work similar to theirs.

> "Um, I know of what you're talking about the national thing. And actually, I would love to have more information about it because we have no way of telling someone who's going through Mobile Alabama on their way to Florida, that, hey, we've got a family here and they won't have they would not have eaten in several, you know, you know, in a day and a half and they could really use food." - P7

Such groups connected to one single organization near them that would then pass on information to stations further along the route.

> "If the migrant is going through San Antonio then we use what's called slack. Okay, so we would give them a heads up and let them know what color their backpack is and what to look for and what their plan is." -P7

However this information is not necessarily passed on to groups further up the routes. Because of overwhelming numbers in border states, it is difficult to pass information regarding migrants numbers to other groups.

> "The other groups mainly did that we were such a hub that our numbers were too overwhelming to provide those specifics." - P4

In some other cases, the numbers were unreliable because there were bottlenecks at bus station hubs were volunteers were not allowed to enter.

> "So at one point, we got the call because the Dallas team could not go into the station. They were kicked out. And they were never allowed to agreed after that to these days, so we never get a heads up. Because even when San Antonio or McAllen, or Phoenix or other stations that feed people through the routes into Dallas could tell us how many people were coming from them. It didn't match the numbers we were getting because in Dallas, there was an absolute mess. And people will be reticketed two or three times and will have a wait of 12 to 15 hours in in Dallas. Because you know, like, you need to think that when we were seeing 120 people a day, the station in San Antonio, the group in San Antonio was seeing 300 to 400 a day." - P1

However, other groups along the route took up the role to become the main input into the information sharing network as P1 mentioned.

> "So the thing when we started was Memphis was going to become the first time in a long time that people could see anybody in a station. So the bus company will not allow groups of volunteers on their main station in Dallas, or the station in Houston. So most of the people that came to us comes from Dallas. Most of the people that go through New Orleans comes from Houston. So that's kind of how the routes are established, right. At one point we are like two members of the of the collective started connecting to other stations and create Facebook private group, which is the one we

used to communicate with the other stations. And then we became kind of like the entry data on that network. So when we report seven to eight stations upstream from us, that served the same schedules, we serve work schedules connected to those get information from them face to the best of our ability, you know, right now, it's very easy to send very specific information about how many people and where are they going and which routes they're taking. " - P1

4.3.2   Offline Approximation of Asylum Seeker Flow

As it is clear from the previous section, many organizations cannot receive information from other stations to anticipate the number of asylum seekers they are to meet. These organizations have other ways of estimating how many people they may have to meet.

For organizations closer to the border, sometimes information stems directly from ICE or Border Patrol, many of whom are congregants of the Church that the organization is affiliated with.

> "ICE communicates with us, how many are being released from the family detention centers. So at least that part, we know usually, that morning, sometimes the day before." - P4

> " And by by the end of June there, there was a we were talking like 150 a day coming coming through being released from Border Patrol. And there's a great partnership between Border Patrol and us. And I think that's why there is not that division of where you'd think, oh, there would be a lot more people against this. Because most people look from the outside and see a humanitarian organization and, and the Border Patrol and think that they would be on opposite ends, where in fact, it's quite the opposite. We work in tandem." - P7

Another organization meticulously documents the number of asylum seekers on online spreadsheets and later used it to estimate the number of asylum seekers to expect at their station.

> "We would all be conscious, that asking those stations to give us information that in the end was not going to be practical, you know, so we compromise for having kind of like a heads up if the numbers were going up or down to kind of like predict. And we kept track of the numbers we were serving, so we could actually see when patterns were changing. So that is basically I am the person that holds the data because I am the person that updates the the spreadsheet and it's me and another another volunteer work on the on the spreadsheet" -P1

4.3.3   Summary

In this section, I presented my findings from the network that was dubbed the 'Overground Railroad'[47]. In this model, organizations from various cities and towns in the US came

together in support of asylum seekers and migrants being released from the southern border of the United States. These organizations provided food and relief primarily at bus stations. I provide a short summary of how the organizations orchestrate this massive effort using an efficient means of information exchange across the country.

- In order for organizations to provide relief to individuals who are travelling by the bus, they must know how many people are travelling and their requirements. This information is passed on to them by the groups that have met the bus along its route at previous stations.

- At some locations such as the Rio Grande Valley, TX or Del Rio, TX this information will not be available as they are origin stations. In addition, since organizations were banned from entering the Dallas station, stations up the route from there such as Memphis, TN do not have information either. In these cases, organizations approximate their expectations using past data regarding the number of migrants previously met.

4.4 Outreach, Advocacy & Digital Organizing

It is no new finding that social media and technology are at the forefront of organizing and crisis response [68, 122, 128, 149].

However, I argue that the immigration crisis is unique in that it has stretched over several years and that the required responses in different regions have been wildly different. In this section, we detail the ways in which technology and social media has been harnessed to support undocumented migrants during this long drawn out crisis.

4.4.1 Social Media's Role

One of the main functions of the organizations I spoke is to expose the injustices that happen with undocumented migrants. Organizations keep their online communities up-to-date with changes in immigration policies and changes to the process of seeking asylum in the United States mainly using their social media profiles. I learnt that each organization has a unique way of using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Facebook

Through the interview process, I learnt that the demographics of over half of the organizations (9/15) were primarily older adults particularly women.

> "Well, most of the women involved with me and grandmothers for peace. They've been activists their whole lives. You know, they were feminists before feminism, and they, they haven't really changed." - P2

"I've noticed that it's more female than male. I'd say the majority are going to be in the upper ages 50s and up, you know, and then and then you'll have some that are in the midlife ages - 30s and 40s. Yeah, but it probably seemed to be a little bit older in it. So for example, I'm, I'm 59 going on 60. You know, so I think maybe kind of in their 50s and 60s." - P5

"We have quite a variety. Um, I would say a lot of our volunteers were able to come, you know, real steady during the day anyway, are like middle upper-class women, white women. We have a lot of religious sisters who are involved." - P4

According a Pew Research report [102], Facebook has remained one of the top choices for social media among older adults (50 and older). This was reinforced by P11 who told us that the largest demographic following the Angry Tias and Abuelas on Facebook was women between 40 and 65 years of age.

On Facebook, I would say our main customer, actually we have some data for this. We have mostly on Facebook women who are like 40 to 65. - P11

It has also has a significant following of 69% among all adults making it an ideal choice for raising awareness among the public. P3 told us her experience of organizing with Facebook, despite its challenges.

"I would say it's pivotal. I mean, I don't know if the response would have been nearly what it was without social media. Facebook, specifically, despite some of the challenges with the chat. It's a free platform that stores as much data as you could possibly want and can connect with people around the world instantaneously. The group that I did, the Facebook discussion group, that I joined. When the news about family separation broke, you could watch, every hour, it had, like 1000 new members. I mean, it's an unprecedented tool, I think, that allows people to organize and activate." - P8

Consistently, I found that every organization had its highest following on Facebook over any other platform.

"So I prefer to use Facebook because we have a much larger following on Facebook too." - P14

Chronicling Work by Organization and General Awareness

I found that Facebook served as a catalog of sorts - listing and documenting the work carried out by the organization for the world to see. This visibility not only helps the organization reach more individuals, it helps raise funds and most importantly, enables them to harness the power of the public to bring about meaningful policy changes.

P11 of the Angry Tias and Abuelas mentioned to me the importance of keeping an up-to-date Facebook page to reach people around the country who don't see the effects of the immigration crisis in their everyday lives. P11 also mentioned that the Facebook page being so well curated resulted in the group not being short of funds.

> "I still have you know, many, many contacts in Minnesota, who don't have to think about this (immigration crisis) on a daily basis. It's nowhere near them. They forget that there are people still sleeping on a bridge or sleeping in tents in the mud. You have to keep reminding people in the other parts of the country that this is happening. So that's what we use Facebook for - to really chronicle what the Tias are doing in the camp. And that, of course, helps bring money, when people see that we're buying $30,000 worth of food to put in the camp before the border closes, then they send money because we don't have to ask for money really. People have sent the Tias money to do what they do." - P11

P1 of the Mariposas Collective also reported using Facebook for similar purposes. Mariposas Collective operates in Memphis, TN further away from the border therefore requiring to remind its community of the horrors faced there as P1 informed me.

> "So everybody knows, and also, but we, as Mariposas collective have been on on social media, you know, like, we have our Facebook page, we keep publishing both articles to keep people informed of what's going on at the border. But also, we report on how many people you're serving, we're reporting that we need more volunteers and how to how to collaborate." - P1

The Facebook Live feature was another reason for the popularity of the platform. With a large number of events moving online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations began using Facebook Live to do informational sessions.

P17 spoke about the California Immigrant Policy Center's annual event "Immigrant Day of Action". This is usually an in-person event in support of the immigrant population involving a rally, speakers, panel discussions with experts and even guest entertainers. 2020's event that had to be moved online on short notice was streamed on Facebook Live.

> "I do think that the Immigrant Day of Action going digital was a really big deal and quite difficult to manage. But we had quite a bit of success and were quite visible. We streamed the whole thing live on Facebook." - P1

In fact, Facebook Live featured in the origins of the organization - Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV. When P6 first began taking supplies across the border to asylum-seekers on the international bridge and camps in Mexico, they did Facebook Live sessions to keep their donors, often friends, abreast of the situation. Then she was by another group of women who then, together, went on to form the Angry Tias and Abuelas.

Figure 4.10: Twitter Successes: Retweet by a tagged lawmaker

"I did a Facebook Live video just telling them this is what we took, this is what I saw and this is what they need. So I'm going to take these things and I did that I think almost every day I give me an update and I did it on Facebook Live. Um, so, you know, my friends could know what's happening." - P6

Twitter

Twitter is actively utilized by fewer organizations than Facebook for outreach purposes. Organizations had varied opinions on why they chose to use Twitter and how they use Twitter. Some participants did not talk about their Twitter presences when ask about their social media indicating their limited use of the platform.

P3 mentioned that their organization didn't utilize Twitter because P3 themselves wasn't an avid user. They also mentioned the difficulty in building up a following on Twitter.

"I'm not a very avid Twitter user. And that's mainly the reason why I don't use it. And to build up a following on Twitter takes some time and dedication." - P3

One organization mentioned to me that they would like to use Twitter to put out factoids to their following. Currently, the organization is not highly active on Twitter averaging 4 tweets every 10 days. P11 mentioned that they would like to have some facts ready for an extended span of time. In addition to this, they viewed Twitter as a platform only for education and not to share the work that they do.

"Twitter, I would I would like to but have not yet used as just an information station that puts out a factoid about immigration policy, how many asylum seekers are in the

> camp in Matamoros today, etc. I just have not been able to get organized enough
> to get like a month of them ahead of me so that I could start doing it that way. So
> it would be we would use Twitter more for education than for saying what we were
> doing. That's what I'd like to do." - P11

One instance of the effective use of Twitter was by the California Immigrant Policy Center
that live tweeted on their Immigrant Day of Action 2020, an in-person conference that was
moved online. P17 reported that the organization was able to have Immigrant Day 2020
trend on Twitter in California giving the organization immense visibility.

> "We were tweeting throughout the whole day. Immigrant Day 2020 was trending in
> California on Twitter for that day, which is like amazing in terms of visibility just
> making legislators really aware." - P17

Organizations also use Twitter to tag concerned parties such as lawmakers, politicians and
journalists to bring their demands, issues and action to light. This strategy is an intelligent
one owing to the large number of politicians and journalists who use Twitter [66, 131].

Twitter was also used for accountability in one case. Lawmakers attended Zoom meetings
with community members on the Immigrant Day of Action 2020. Later, screenshots of
these meetings were posted to Twitter tagging the lawmakers ensuring that they were held
accountable. On one occasion, the tweet was retweeted by Senator Holly J Mitchell. This
indicates not only that the organization's voice was heard but endorsed by lawmakers and
also reaches a much larger following. A screenshot of this is displayed in Figure 4.10.

> "We tagged Senator Holly Mitchell on a couple things. She retweeted stuff on immi-
> grant day of action. We had multiple legislative meetings where we brought community
> members in to have these zoom meetings with with legislators and their legislative staff.
> We asked folks to take screenshots of their meetings and like thank that person but
> also hold them accountable. So if you have a screenshot of everyone, Brady Bunch
> style, smiling on the Zoom saying thank you so much to whoever for the meeting with
> us to talk about the importance of health for all seniors, we really hope that we can
> count on you to prioritize undocumented seniors in the budget. And she retweeted it,
> you know." - P17

Finally we also found that organizations used hashtags to get their message to community.
P11 mentioned that they used common hashtags for political reporters to get their attention
towards a press release or advisory.

> "But I think more importantly, I use Twitter for reaching like political reporters like
> Politico's in Colorado. So there's this hashtag called, ColoradoPolitics or ColoradoPolls
> and ColoradoLeg for legislative sessions. I oftentimes post a press release or advisory
> with a graphic that has the intro part of the press release. Then I tag some of the
> reporters that I know would want would be interested in covering it. Or I also tag

about local TV broadcast affiliates, newspapers or whatever it may be. So that's mostly what I use Twitter for." - P14

Despite finding several organizations currently using Twitter to get the word out, I found that Facebook was preferred for the immigration crisis in the US. P3 reported that Twitter was a tool that they would utilize to send out information on the go but for long-term issues,they preferred Faceboook.

"Twitter is you know, it's good to get out as it's happening information. And you're right, Facebook is better for long term organizing and sharing of information." - P3

Another reason why Facebook was preferred by organizations is due to the rich analytics that it provided to the page and group administrators. In contrast, P12 reported, Twitter does not provide in depth details regarding the reach of a particular post instead lumping an entire week of statistics together.

"Whereas on Facebook, like there's so much rich data on like - this type of posts got like a huge amount of following or like this post went viral. And Twitter doesn't have that. It has maybe a weekly total of like your likes and stuff, but it doesn't break it down per post or things like that. And so I prefer to use Facebook because we have a much larger following on Facebook too." - P12

In this unique crisis situation, learning what kind of posts are popular and well received is important as it helps organizations formulate their social media strategy.

In addition, I found that organizations found Facebook being able to host private groups advantageous. This way groups can coordinate public and private information on the same platform. It also host to several other Human Rights organizations indicating that collaboration and sharing of information is simpler. P14 mentioned to me that collaboration on Twitter through hashtags were not as useful as those found on Facebook.

We have some of our member organizations and in like secret groups, so that they can discuss things internally. And, and then there's so many groups that you can like post to, I feel a lot more connected to like the activist community in Colorado via Facebook than via Twitter, because of these groups. And so it's a function that just Twitter just doesn't have. I get tags are kind of the hashtags but I just don't find it as useful. It seems like it's like too much information, it's just overwhelming. - P14

Instagram

Instagram was the most sparsely used social media tool often having the least following across the three social media domains of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Organizations' Instagram profiles often tended to be strikingly similar to their Facebook feeds.

One reason groups could be discouraged to use Instagram was the requirement of pictures.

> "The hard part for that is I have to keep the women taking pictures. We need our own pictures because on Instagram, you can't put anything up if you don't have a picture. You know, that's the whole basis of it." - P11

In addition, I found that the inability to post on Instagram through a browser also made it difficult to use. Older adults struggled with sending pictures back and forth between their phones and their computers to post them across different social media platforms.

> "I find Instagram difficult to use because first of all, you have to do it on your phone. I have it on my laptop but I can't seem to post anything from there. I can only read from there. And so to post things, I have to do it from little teeny tiny phone, which is not comfortable. Maybe for somebody, in my age especially, it's not real comfortable to do everything from here. I have some photos on my phone and some photos on my laptop and you have to move photos back and forth through your email, so that you can use them on different platforms." - P11

4.4.2 Summary

In this section, I described the tools and technology that supported organizations' digital organizing and advocacy efforts. We found that social media played the most important role in this area. Here, I summarize the social media platforms and tools that are in use and how they are used to achieve the desired result for the organizations.

- Facebook was the most popular tool used by organizations followed by Twitter and then Instagram.

- Facebook was used primarily to chronicle the work of the organizations and raising general awareness in the community. The Facebook Live feature was used substantially to replace activities that would have happened in-person if not for the COVID-19 pandemic. Events usually tend to be conferences that discuss policy decisions that the organizations will work on during the subsequent year.

- Twitter was predominantly used to reach out to journalists and lawmakers who had a prominent presence on social media. Organizations utilized hashtags that were common to the area's political news in order to attract the attention of journalists. They also used Twitter to hold their lawmakers and policymakers accountable by publicly announcing the policies that they promised to endorse.

- Instagram was more sparingly used than the aforementioned platforms. One reason for this, as mentioned by a participant, was that Instagram was heavily image depen-

dent. Sometimes organizations did not have representative images to share. Otherwise, organizations' Instagram pages tended to be very similar to their Facebook pages.

4.5   Care-Work & Invisible-Work in Organizations

Organizations' work (as described in Section 4.1) with migrants especially through their volunteers involves one-on-one interaction with the migrants who they support. In other words, volunteers and members are constantly involved in care-work. Care work is defined as a subcategory of work that involves work done in service of other people. In this section, I view the work done by organizations' for the migrants through the lens of care. I use the definition provided by Villacres-Wong et al. in [149] that defines care as "ongoing interactions among the different actors of the crisis landscape (ad hoc logisticians, victims, and non-affected citizens), social media, supplies, and the sites themselves, that take place when the crisis landscape is perceived as being neglected or becoming more vulnerable, aiming to improve the conditions of said landscape". In this study, I consider the migration crisis in the southern border of the United States as people from different countries (most commonly Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala) seek asylum at the US-Mexico border a part of the crisis landscape. I also consider the current illegal immigrants in the country and DACA recipients[4] a part of the crisis landscape. By the definition provided by Villacres-Wong et al. [149], I argue that all work done to support migrants by the organizations is a form of care-work. However, some acts of care go unnoticed because it happens out of public view. This type of work is called invisible work[126]. This invisible work has helped organizations overcome issues in coordination, resource mobilization and the technologies that support migrants. In this section, I highlight the invisible work and care-work that involved purely people's time, energy and access to online resources.

Resource Mobilization is a long, arduous task. On the face of it, resource mobilization usually involves gathering required items and delivering them at a storage facility or to people who need them. For example, when organizations provide essentials at bus stations (as described in Section 4.1.1), only the work of those volunteers who are actually present at the station to meet the buses and the migrants are visible. In truth, several individuals are involved in making this possible. Their work remains behind the scenes and completely invisible to observers [126]. First, the organizations' volunteers or members must raise funds or request donations of specific items that they require. The technologies that make this possible are discussed in Section 4.2. Next, the organizations must have its volunteers or members receive, sort and store the items received with care ensuring that perishable items are stored properly. After this, members or volunteers must put together packs of snacks or toiletries or assemble backpacks as depicted in Figures 4.1, 4.4 and 4.2. Finally, volunteers who do 'bus runs', i.e., make the visit to the bus station laden with the supplies.

Assembling the snack packs, the toiletry packs and the bus packs is an important but tedious

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[4]children of illegal migrants born in the US or brought to the US at a very young age
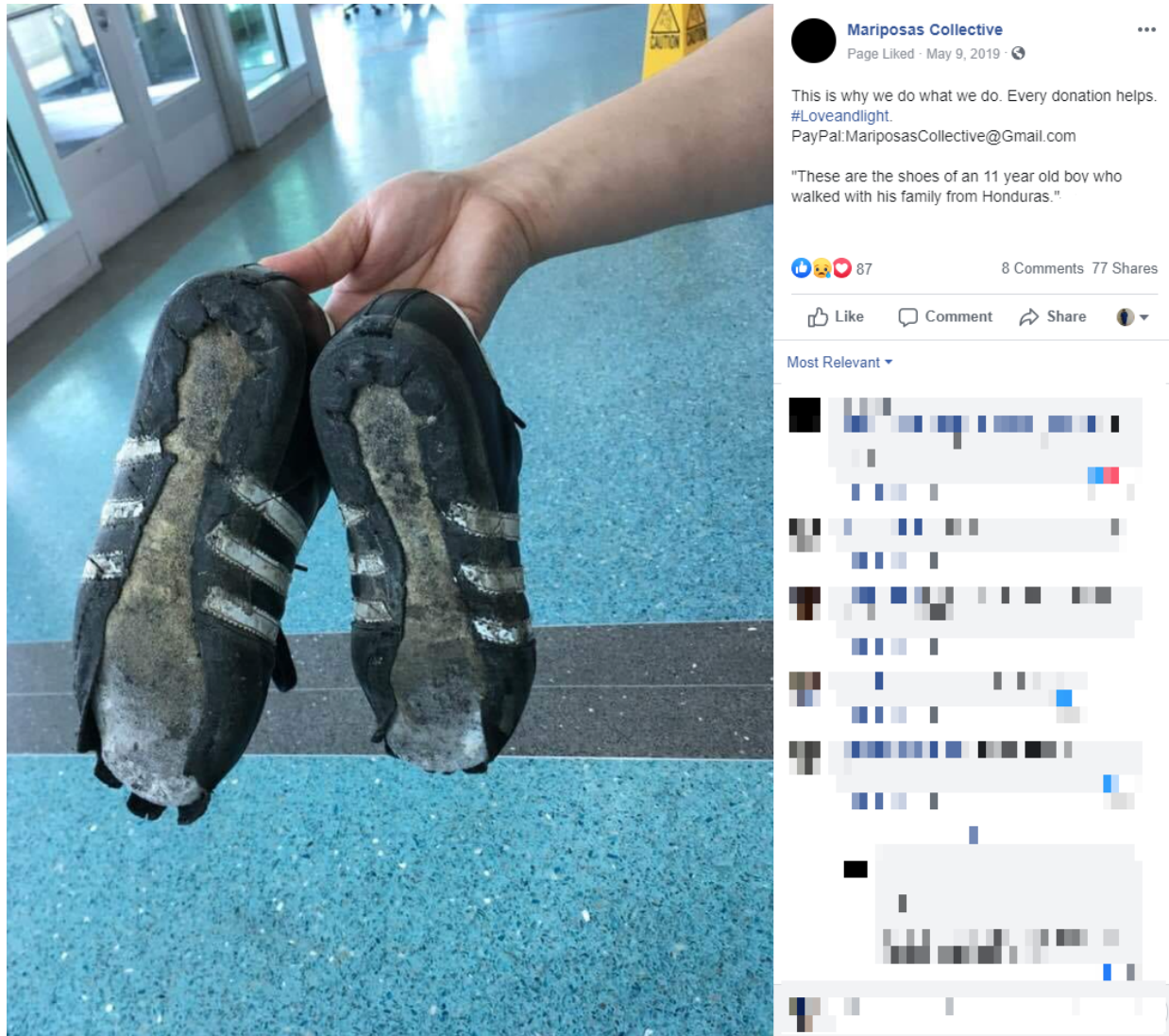
Figure 4.11: Walk in my shoes: A story by the Mariposas Collective

Figure 4.12: She was dirty: A story by the Angry Tias and Abuelas of the RGV

Figure 4.13: Father and child lose their lives while attempting to cross the Rio Grande river. Photo credit: New York Times

job. Organizations have found different ways to make 'packing' into a fun group activity. Two organizations that I spoke to mentioned having 'packing parties'. These 'packing parties' are an opportunity for a large number of volunteers to meet put together the packs.

> "We packaged food generally speaking that we could store - crackers, instant food mixes, canned soup. We'd have packing parties to assemble them in brown paper bags. You know, we made so much fun out of the whole thing." - P2

> "(Founder)'s devotion to the cause is massively obvious in her deeds - ..... arranging packing parties to bag the snacks and toiletries for the bus travelers ...." - P2

As Puig states in her work [25], packing parties are an 'ordinary labour activity' that is crucial in getting things done.

Another way we see care-work in resource mobilization is how material convergence is handled. Material convergence is a term used to describe the spontaneous flow of relief material to the site of a disaster in crisis response situations[42]. Post disaster humanitarian logistics (PD-HL) is the management of the large amounts of donated items including some that may be unsuitable or useless and maneuvering large amounts of uncertainty concerning availability of space and resources[149].

From my interviews, I found there was one main issue in material convergence - excess supplies of specific items. In one case, the Mariposas Collective organization received an excess of sanitary napkins that they could not find use for in the near future. This excess was donated to a women's prison. P1, a member of the Mariposas Collective, mentioned that the supply was donated to them by another aid organization. In other words, a mutual aid network was formed. Mutual aid networks facilitate a voluntary exchange of goods and services among members of the network.

> "We have groups that will hear from us ... and they will call us and say, "Hey, we got this donation of sanitary pads, but it's something that is going to take us three

years to go through. Do you think that you will you be able to use some of that?"
When the needs went down, and we had too much of an item, we will contact other
organizations like the people that are going to jails, you know, on providing sanitary
products in women's jails, you know, women's prisons." - P1

By creating a mutual aid network, organizations found a way to dispose off their excess
donations with care.

The Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers (FFOAS) found a different use for their excess dona-
tions. P8, founder of the FFOAS, told me that they saw an excess of clothing donation in
various sizes. P8 reported that they were unable to give away larger clothing. The volun-
teers in the organization suggested they turn them into satchels to donate other items in.
These handmade satchels replaced the backpacks that the group was originally purchasing
to provide the asylum seekers.

> "We were buying backpacks at the resale store so that we could stuff with things to
> give them for their journey. And then some of the grandmothers, they know how to
> sew. We were donated so much clothes. Some of the clothes are very large clothes for
> very large people. And so we had a lot of clothes that we had nobody to give it to. So
> one of the volunteers said can I turn these into bags? And so we said absolutely. So
> they took a lot of these large skirts and things and turned them into beautiful satchels
> that we could stuff with things to give the asylum seekers." - P8

This account of groups transforming showed how the group cared for maximizing benefits
from their available donations as an 'affect-driven force'[149] driving them to a 'material
remaking of the world'[25] transforming ostensibly useless resources (large clothes) to useful
items (satchels).

I also learnt that monetary donations or being able to purchase specific resources were not
the only way that participants could contribute to supporting migrants in their area. One
participant, P9, shared her motivation to help migrants in the area and why she does it. P9
informed me that despite their limited means, their knowledge of local resources helps her
find low cost resources and supplies.

> " Also, there have been times in my life when I have been quite poor. I got through
> it because friends helped me. I'm not rich now, either. Yet I have enough to share.
> So this is my chance to pay the help forward. And I know what local resources are
> available, to get free or low cost supplies." - P9

P9 reported that they attended several swap events at the local library (before the beginning
of the COVID-19 pandemic) where they swapped resources available to them for resources
that could be donated to asylum seekers. During a Craft Swap event, P9 swapped a packet
of craft beads they owned for knitting yarn and needles that the organization (FFOAS) used
to knit scarves and hats for asylum seekers during the winter. Similarly during a Clothes

Swap event, P9 exchanged some of their extra clothing for children's and adults jackets that were then donated to asylum seekers at bus stations (as mentioned in Section 4.1.1). Finally during a Plant Swap event, P9 swapped some seeds she owned for vegetable seeds, divided them in 4 packages and donated it to the asylum seekers who lived in their area (see Section 4.1.4). P9 was mindful of the fact that the asylum seekers used to be organic farmers and would find the seeds they donated very useful.

> "I participated in several of my favorite events at the Regional Library. They hold swap events and participation is free of charge. So during the Craft Swap, I traded extra packets of beads that I had for knitting yarn and needles. (FFOAS Member) kindly picked the yarn bags up for me and took them over to (FFOAS Member). (FFOAS Member) then distributed the yarn to knitters in the group, who knit hats and scarves for our asylum seekers ...... It takes a village, and we have a caring village with good teamwork. The Library also hosts a Clothing Swap. I swapped my extras for children's and adult jackets, because many of the asylum seekers on the bus runs were headed north, and needed warmer clothing. I was able to get several bags worth. I felt glad to have something I could do to help that happen. I went to the Plant Swap, hosted at the Library by the Master Gardeners. There I got vegetable seeds that I stored over the winter. Then I divided them up into as equal shares as I could, and sent 4 sets over to our newly arrived asylum residents, who are organic farmers. This will get them started with growing food for their families, this summer." - P9

Once again, members of the FFOAS organization showed me that, with effort and care, it was possible to create a 'material remaking of the world' - turning seemingly useless resources into things that would be very useful to asylum seekers.

4.5.1   Summary

In this section, I highlighted some of the invisible work and care-work carried out by organizations. A lot of activity goes into making a successful 'bus run' (see Section 4.1.1) or an advocacy event. Here, I summarize some of the activities that happened behind the scenes and were instrumental in the success of the organizations.

- Organizations provide asylum seekers with food, other essential items such as toiletries and sometimes even stationary. These items have to be procured and put together in neat packets before they are delivered to the migrants. This massive effort is usually undertaken by volunteers whose work never attracts much attention.

- Resource mobilization also sometimes results in attracting a large amount of certain items that could potential be useful. I found that organizations locally created mutual aid networks so these items may be of use to other organizations.

- I also found some cases in which organizations made the best use of the items that were available to them. Organizations that were donated large clothes that could not be passed on often used the material to put together colorful satchels for the migrants.

- Members of organizations who could not afford to contribute monetarily often found their own way of contributing sometimes with time and other times with knowledge. We found one member who attended swap events to exchange items that belonged to her for clothing, yarn and seeds for the migrants.

4.6 Storytelling, Empathy & Sympathy

Studies in the past have shown that there is a link between storytelling and empathy [10, 11, 69, 82]. Keen [69] suggests that people identify with the characters in the stories even when the reader and character are very different from one another. This means that organizations could leverage the stories that they hear first-hand from the migrants as well as their own experiences from the migrants to raise awareness about the issues that the migrants are facing. These stories could be a first step in changing the anti-immigrant sentiment that has gripped the United States in recent times [58, 148].

In this section, through our semi-structured interviews (explained in Section 3.4), we discover how organizations are retelling migrants' stories and their own experience with the migrants to inspire empathy in the public.

4.6.1 Telling Migrants' Stories

As far as retelling migrants stories go, I found there is a mixed opinion on whether organizations are willing to share stories that are shared with them. First, I learned that the organizations believed there to be a big difference between sharing what they saw on meeting the migrants versus what was shared to the organization by the migrants. In the first case, members of the organization relate what they see, for example, the condition of the migrant as they arrived and their interaction with them. In the second case, organizations talk about what was shared with them by the migrant - this may include the harrowing stories of how they made their journey to the US border. I found there were concerns of anonymity, safety and trust in sharing intimate details of trauma that the migrants have faced on their journey to the United States. More organizations were comfortable in sharing their experience with the migrants than the stories of the migrants. I learnt that the stories of the migrants often contained gory details of kidnap, rape and death.

> "I think there's at least one other story about a woman who was kidnapped three times and raped and all kinds of business like that." -P11

> " And I tell you, these people are so darn strong, because this baby is a result of a rape as she was on her way from her country to this to this country. And even after going through that horrible experience, she couldn't put the child up for adoption." -P8

Organizations also felt differently about sharing stories and anecdotes depending on whether they were intended for fundraising or to raise awareness among the public.

Even though appalling stories of the migrants can be very effective in spreading awareness of the situation, in the context of fundraising, donors could feel their emotions were being manipulated by the fundraising organization. Studies have found that positive or warmth appeals depicting previous beneficiaries (helped individuals) are more effective in fundraising than negative or guilt/shame appeals that depict needy beneficiaries [35, 50, 150]. In line with this, participants reported that using the migrants' stories for its 'shock factor' and in turn for fundraising is unethical.

> "I will never retell an abuse story as a shock factor intended to play on people's feelings, to get them to give more. I've seen that done by other groups, but I consider any such behavior highly unethical." -P9

> "A good reputable organization is going to care about how the person is going to feel when they tell their story. Are they going to have the opportunity to speak and that's something they want or are they going to feel like they're being used? And so, like we are really cautious about this. We want people to feel empowered when they tell their stories." -P16

Contrastingly,other studies have shown that feeling specifically upset by a situation might also have a significant effect on potential donors [76]. In addition, a study by Dickert, Sagara and Slovic [129], shows that is related to mood-management. In order for organizations to operationalize the stories they possess to effectively fundraise, they should understand the emotional impact of their appeal on their potential donors. I further discuss the types of appeals, their emotional impact and implications on charitable giving for emergent and extending organizations in Section 5.4.

Some organizations were reluctant to share stories that were related to them by migrants. These organizations were open to sharing information that they observed when they met the migrants at bus stations, migrant camps, detention center or when they provided them with essentials or services. Organizations at the border shared stories and images of the conditions of the migrants at refugee camps and while they waited at the bridge. Organizations in other parts of the country told stories about their immigrant communities or those they have helped at bus-stations or detention centers.

> "We may have told general information like who we met this morning, a family of three with two little kids that have been in detention for four months. And we don't do it with the intention of like bringing more attention to what we do or so we can get more donations. It's more like putting in context what people think about who these people are and what they are going through." -P1

Out of the 19 participants belonging to 14 organizations I spoke to, 11 organizations supported sharing their volunteers experience with the migrants including what they saw when they were with the migrants, how they helped them and how they felt during the interaction. P4 mentioned that knowing someone's story would make people less likely to look at

individuals like statistics. This is in line with research by Zagefka et al.[150] that states that individuals are more likely to be moved when presented with the suffering of a "single, identifiable person" rather than by the information that a large number of people are suffering.

> "On our Facebook page, we did tell stories. You know, we did tell some stories of things that actually happened to us individually. And those stories tend to be very moving." -P2

> "It's hard to be prejudiced and hateful when you know somebody's story. So, that's one of the aims of collecting some of the stories from the families and seeking ways to share those. You know, one of our board members is looking at a way to maybe put different ones on our website, and then, we can share those also the link through Facebook. Trying to help people meet the families so to speak, so they're real people and not just statistics." -P4

In the rest of this section, I delve into deeper detail how organizations' experience with serving migrants. I also discuss how the stories of the migrants themselves are presented online to bring about awareness and desired change in society. Here, I also put the findings in the context of anonymity, trust and safety for the migrants who form a vulnerable population.

4.6.2   Trust and Anonymity in Storytelling

One of the most important considerations in storytelling is anonymity and trust as the migrant population especially asylum seekers are fleeing violent and often dangerous conditions [80, 85, 142]. Many migrants flee recruitments into gangs and cartels in their home countries. In addition, sometimes, migrants are indebted to *coyotes* [98], or Mexican smugglers who illegally smuggle the migrants across the US-Mexican border into the US for exorbitant rates [75]. These coyotes tend to be aware of the whereabouts of the migrants and their loved ones threatening to hurt or kill them should their debt not be paid. This means that images of the migrants and any identifiable information or stories that they share have to be handled with care. In one case related to me, a coyote 'trafficked' a woman across the border whose current whereabouts are unknown.

> "Last year I received a call from an OBGYN doctor in Martinsville who found out about the work we do with asylum seekers. He had a patient who was severely abused, so much so that he feared for her life. Doc said that the patient had secured a coyote to provide safety and transport to the border from Guatemala for her and her 9 year old son. They agreed on a price for this "service". When they arrived at the border the coyote told her that the journey was more difficult than anticipated and the fee went up by $100 US dollars. She did not have the money for the additional fee. The coyote made a call to someone in Martinsville who offered to "buy" her and her son to relieve her of the extra fee. That is the man that abused her. The doc had a follow

> up visit scheduled for the following Monday and we agreed that I would be taking her
> and her son (who had come to the first visit with her) out the back door and into my
> car where I would take her to safety. She never showed up for the follow up visit. Her
> whereabouts are unknown."

P11 informed me that the migrants continue to be in danger even after they are granted
entry into the United States. Organizations are worried that someone may kill the migrant
or their families.

> "The grown ups also often in danger from where they came from and there are people
> who are looking for them and they can use face recognition software ..... where these
> people are and come kill them. You know, kidnap them or kill their families. So they
> are still in danger." -P11

In order to keep the asylum seekers safe and at the same time be able to share their pictures
and stories, I found that organizations blurred or superimposed the faces of asylum seekers
is necessary. In addition, I found that their names are either anonymized or not used at all.
However, one participant told me that they found it challenging to do this.

> "And that's the reason why we blur anybody's face that's at all recognizable. That's
> the biggest challenge." -P11

> "The angry tias in our Facebook page will post pictures of our work but we blur out
> the faces of the asylum seekers." -P6

This could be due to the fact that social media platforms themselves do not provide any
blurring tools and organizations usually resort to using their mobile applications to blur
pictures. P11 also mentioned that because of physiological reasons, using her phone for work
is difficult. This shortcoming in social media applications is further discussed in Section 5.1.

> "A drawback with blur face and with other apps is that it only works on my phone not
> on my PC. So all that energy, work etc needs to happen on my phone which is not so
> great for my slow fingers or my bad eyes. Sometimes I just want to have the pictures
> up on my laptop so I can check for how clear they are and do some other editing stuff
> to do that requires moving things back and forth between phone and laptop which I
> do by emailing them to myself." -P11

Alternatively, organizations came up with creative ways to send the message while keeping
the subject of the picture anonymous. For example, Figure 4.11 is just a picture of a pair of
shoes with completely worn-out soles. The asylum seeker may not be in the image but one
can imagine the long arduous journey that they walked in those shoes. Instead of focusing
on the weary face of an asylum seeker, they creatively focus on the worn out shoes with
the same effect. Another example is the image of a little girl's clothes and shoes that are

dirty from her journey and stay in the detention center as shown in Figure 4.12. Once again, creatively, the organization does not focus on the face of the child instead focusing on her clothing and her concern of soiling her new bagful of goodies.

In some rare instances, asylum seekers come forward to be identified by their real names.

> "I interviewed this man and I told him it's for this journal, we don't have to use your real name, we can use a made up name, and he just interrupted me. He's like, "No, I've told all the reporters that they can use my name, you can take a picture, nothing of what I'm saying is a lie."" - P6

In addition to this, trust is also an important factor in hearing asylum seekers stories as P1 related to me when speaking about how they navigate journalist interactions with asylum seekers at the station.

> "I've been an interpreter and when you're interpreting for somebody, the person trusts you intrinsically at one point. So if you ask them, they would like to give permission for these people to take a picture, they're going to do it because you are asking. So I always said the same thing, you (the journalist) always have to actually establish credibility with the people there - that's on them. We don't do it for them." - P1

In this way, organizations not only earn the trust of the migrants but also keep it.

4.6.3   Effective Storytelling for Narrative Empathy

All of our subjects (belonging to both emergent and extending organizations) concurred that sharing stories of the migrants on social media brought in more engagement.

> "It seems it's hard to be prejudiced and hateful when you know somebody's story. So that's one of the aims of collecting some of the stories from the families and seeking ways to share those." - P4

However, some organizations are not open to sharing the intricate details from the migrants' stories. As I mentioned in Section 4.6.1, migrants' stories especially of their journey and why the fled their countries. One participant told us that their organization was concerned that their audience may be overwhelmed and not engage with their content any longer.

> "Sometimes we would tell stories, but some of these people have been through some really horrific things, obviously. We've always kept it kind of light on that page. We haven't taken the avenue of, you know, telling the nitty gritty, gory truth at all. I think with some people, the nitty gritty, gory work, it helps them engage and understand better. But I think with some audiences, it's too overwhelming and they shut down. So I think there are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. " - P3

This view that audience would be overwhelmed by horrifying details about the migrants' lives was reinforced by an interaction of a Facebook user with P6. In June 2019, a Salvadorian father and child lost their lives by drowning while trying to cross the Rio Grande river that flows between Mexico and the United States [120]. The image of the bodies of the father and child lying face down on the shores (depicted here in Figure 4.13 captured the attention of the world. This image was shared by the Angry Tias and Abuelas of the Rio Grande Valley's Facebook page.

> "It was the picture of them when they were found. And we posted that and some people were very upset that we posted that picture on our page. And so we had one, there were several people, but there was one who messaged us saying, that was disrespectful that we posted that picture. We explained to her saying, you know, we believe we think that these kinds of images, you know, as terrible as they are, can have an impact to make people look this way and want to do something against the inhumane conditions in which these people are living. The person disagreed with us. And, and we told them if you disagree, that's fine, but they kind of kept sending us messages. And they even started sending messages to other members, just to their personal Facebook. So that went on for a bit until then, after we changed the picture at the end of that month." - P6

Suzanne Keen in her article "A Theory of Narrative Empathy"[69] discusses the power of storytelling in inspiring sympathy and empathy. In this article she states that when a person's empathetic response is over-aroused and causes personal distress, it forces them to turn away from the condition instead of responding to it with empathy. Therefore, it is important for organizations to find the fine line between providing the whole truth - a story with maximum affect - and hiding some details in order to produce the optimum affect in their community.

I discuss this fine line and how social media platforms can support this storytelling further in Section 5.3.

4.6.4 Summary

In this section, I discussed the effects of telling stories about the migrants' lives. Here, I summarize the key learnings that were presented in this section.

- Organizations felt that there was a key difference between the stories that were shared with them by the migrants versus their observations when they met the migrants. Most organizations were more comfortable with sharing stories they observed versus some of the stories that were related to them by migrants.

- As migrants are a vulnerable population, trust and anonymity are key issues to consider before telling/hearing their stories.

- Organizations required blurring tools in order to use photos that were taken of the asylum seekers. Since social media does not provide one and online platforms sparingly have blurring tools, organizations rely on their mobile for this. This results in a lot of tedious back and forth between their phone and computer over email.

- Organizations also found other creative ways to preserve anonymity by focusing on an object representative of their migrant's struggle or focus on some other part of their bodies like their hands or feet.

- In this section, I also found that organizations had different opinions about sensitive information shared by migrants. While some organizations believe that this would be too much distressing information for migrants, others felt that sharing this information will make people more aware of the situation.

4.7   Online and Offline Fundraising

Batson proposed the empathy-altruism hypothesis [4, 5] which indicates that a creation of empathy elicits an altruistic response in human beings. This theory is currently being leveraged to raise funds for the organizations.

In this section, I discovered the factors that affect a good fundraising initiative, the role of storytelling and the technologies that support online and offline fundraising.

I found that few of the grassroots organizations, only 2 namely the 'Angry Tias and Abuelas' and 'Alianza Communitaria', that I spoke with have a social media or an online fundraising strategy. In this section, I draw inspiration from the Coalitions to understand how non-profit fundraising works in this unique crisis situation.

4.7.1   Online Fundraising

Studies have shown that offline fundraising initiatives such as mail, door-to-door and tele-marketing be time and cost intensive [116]. With the widespread use of the web and social media, people are more easily accessible [121]. I found that all the organizations we spoke to had either utilized or utilize one of the following:

- Online Fundraising Platforms: Platforms such as GoFundMe and Kickstarter enable organizations to create, share and manage fundraisers with a specific goal for various purposes. These fundraisers are free of cost to the organization. In this category, GoFundMe was the most commonly used platform. One organization, the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, found enormous success in using raising $80,000 during GivingTuesday[5]

   "And then once a year we do the ColoradoGives campaign or Giving Tuesday campaigns and those go via the ColoradGives.org webpage, which is much better

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[5]https://www.givingtuesday.org/

Figure 4.14: Father's Day Fundraiser. Images courtesy of the *Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees*.

Figure 4.15: COVID-19 Undocumented Workers Fundraiser. Images courtesy of the *Colorado Immigrant Rights Coaltion.*

than Facebook. It gives us all of the information for those donors unless they choose to be anonymous. And so we've you know, every year, like this last year, we raised $80,000 in December which is like a good chunk of our grassroots fundraising goal."

- Online Toolsets: Online toolsets provide organizations not only with the ability to create and manage fundraisers but also to reach out to their donors in a variety of ways such as email and phone. Tools such as ActBlue, ActionNetwork and CloverGive also provide organizations detailed statistics regarding their donors for both fundraising and outreach purposes. Organizations tended to prefer using these toolsets because of the availability of analytics. These analytics were employed in designing future fundraisers and campaigns.

  "Our main fundraising apparatus is Action Network. It lets us use all kinds of forums, petitions and letter campaigns for our advocacy work, but also allows us to do fundraisers or paid ticketed events. So we usually do most of our fundraising there." - P14

- Social Media Platforms: Social Media has been a fantastic way for organizations to leverage their members' personal connection to raise funds. Several studies have shown that leveraging the [84]. I found that Facebook was the most popular platform for fundraising because of its "Create a Fundraiser" feature. Some organizations even reached out to community members with a good social media following to create fundraisers on their behalf.

  "So everything we do to reach out to the community, we do it through Facebook. We don't like it that much. But for our purposes, it allowed us to do what we need, and to keep people connected and to keep asking for donations." - P1

  "Facebook has actually been one of our best fundraisers because we demonstrated need and people see it, then they give and then their friend sees that they gave.

> So and we've had another deal where we've asked people on their birthdays to do a Facebook fundraiser for us if they have a great social media presence. And as an activist, like we seek out people, "Hey, your birthday is coming out. You've got a great social media presence. Would you do a fundraiser for us?" " - P10

However, this did not come without issues. I found one organization that was averse to using Facebook Fundraisers possibly because they didn't understand how to use them. The organization worked around the issue by providing interested fundraisers a link to share to their Facebook profile to leverage their connections.

> "But I don't remember why the Tias told me they didn't want to use the Facebook one, I think probably because they didn't understand how to use it. But I have figured out through Act Bluee, how to set up a separate line. Like if somebody wants that to be their birthday fundraiser. I can give them a distinct URL for people to get money to and then I can account for how much money came in. So it's basically the same as Facebook. It's just as easy for the person" - P11

Facebook requires to non-profits to have verified badges before they are able to set up fundraisers [44]. Organizations may not be immediately aware that only such pages are allowed to raise funds through Facebook. This shows the need for making features on social media simpler to set up and use. I discuss the ways that platforms such as Facebook need to adapt to support non-profit and grassroots organizations better in Section 5.1.

- Email: Organizations who are able to learn who their donors contact them directly through email. Language and content is often tailored to donors depending on how much they have contributed previously. For example, P14 told me that their organization segregated their donors into 4 categories - low level donors who donate about $5 a month, medium level donors who donate about $500 a month, high level donors who donate about $5000 a month and grant makers who are part of foundations that grant funds to their organization. P14 sent emails soliciting funds tailoring them to the type of donor that the person has been in the past.

> "Low level donors, mid level donors, high level donors, and grant makers want to hear different things. So grant makers, we don't usually send like fundraising emails to, we just have the development director give reports that are tailored to what the grants are. But higher level donors, like, someone gives $5,000 like, they really want to see, that their money's doing a whole lot. So then we might showcase a giant mega workshop that we did and we helped 200 people apply for citizenship over a weekend. It makes them feel like their money is really making a huge, huge impact. Whereas like, the smaller level, don't Like, we try to kind of flip them from being like one-time donors to like, what if you give $5 a month, right? If you know you can afford to give like $5,000 a year you can give $5 a month. And so those stories are more about like - you are becoming part of our movement. We call our that the sustaining donor campaign or we call it circle of friends, or Coalition's called circle. They're helping the movement keep moving.

> We try to send them like events from our member or, or things in which they could just go and get involved. Mid-level donors, I think, we try to do a mix of the two." - P14

Fundraising through creation of Narrative Empathy

I found that most successful fundraisers either had a story or a narrative linked to them. Take for example the fundraiser depicted in Figure 4.12, this story elicited the maximum responses from the Angry Tias and Abuelas community.

The vignette written by the organization shown in Figure 4.12, though in third person, is powerful because the audience is able to identify with the character and feel her disgust of dirt. However, disgust is an emotion not commonly associated with children and develops with age [112]. This story not only makes its audience feel empathy but also its close cousin, sympathy [69]. P6 offered their opinion on why the story was successful in moving its audience.

> "I think it may be made people sad that this little girl felt this way, like that a little kid could feel so dirty because the kids not gonna care. The other day, I went to lunch with a friend and she was babysitting a kid that was like four or five. And she was just lying on the floor at the restaurant, not caring that there's germs there. I'm not around too many kids, but most kids are kind of like that. They don't really care about germs. And they don't know what this kid knew like this kid had been through so much that she just already felt like I don't want to touch those clean items because I'm so dirty. I think that's why like that was it for me. Like for a kid to feel that way. It was just so heartbreaking. so upsetting. You know, I think that's might have been the thing that got these people that a kid could feel that way." - P6

Even fundraisers that were not as evocative with their writing such as in Figure 4.14 were successful as they evoked empathy in the reader. On Father's day, fathers who were inmates at detention centers are unable to spend the day with their children. This fundraiser asked for donations towards phone time for the inmates that can cost between 21 cents to 45 cents a minute.

Another way organizations insert narrative into their fundraisers are by telling the prospective donors stories of what their donation is going to be used towards.

> "Usually those appeals include a story of someone that our work is impacted, as a way, you know, to exemplify the impact without using like statistics" - P14

Figure 4.15 shows an excerpt from an email circulated by an organization explaining how the money donated to the Undocumented Workers Fund was being spent.

4.7.2 External Factors to Online Fundraising

I learnt that there are key external factors that determine the success of an organization's fundraisers. For example, as P11 mentions to us, personal relationships offline are the most important factor in establishing trust between the organizations and those who donate to them. This group takes people on tours to camps and detention centers to highlight the dire situations being faced by migrants. In the process, they also forge strong interpersonal relationships.

> "All of that stuff that we just talked about, for me goes under the heading making relationships. Before Facebook ever existed I did fundraisers, I've raised millions of dollars for different organizations across the country. And the thing is making relationships, you can put all the crap you want on all these platforms, it doesn't matter. That is probably 25% of the job. 75% of the job is the relationship that we make on the day we give people a tour around the camp. And the end the relationship that we make when we're taking other women to visit the detention center and teaching them how to do that. It's all about relationship building. If we never had any relationships, we couldn't raise a nickel on Facebook or anyplace else." - P11

Some organizations design their fundraisers in such a way that they can leverage each of their members' or volunteers' personal relationships. Each of the members create their own fundraisers so that may be found by their connections to donate to. The members in turn donate to the main fundraiser.

> "For Colorado Gives day, we have each staff member create their own profile on Colorado gifts in the profile, then, donate to the main fundraiser. But so we find that is one of the most effective ways to fund raise because whatever people are already really connected with community with a lot of personal relationships. And so we try to leverage those, whether they be just personal or like professional relationships." - P14

They were careful to target each of their members' profiles to a specific cause. For example, P14's organization - Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition - created individual causes such as:

- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): DACA is a renewable two year deferal of deportation and eligibility for a work permit if individuals were illegally brought into the country as children. This cause helps people pay their legal fee for DACA filing.

- ICE Resistance: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is a federal organization that is incharge of identifying illegal individuals to the US. Because of the complicated history of illegal migration to the US, many individuals and organizations believe that raiding homes and checking for documentation at checkposts is predatory. This cause supports program that displays resistance to ICE policy.

- Legal Services: Many legal services could be provided by organizations. Usually, this constitutes legal fee or legal counsel for citizenship applications.

  "And so we try to be strategic about what our individual profiles would look like. So we split up different topics that appeal to different like people, whether it's legal services, or DACA, or policy or ice resistance, where we're like youth leadership or leadership development, so that there's different angles, and like, you know, different stories can reach different audiences. And so, I think that's one of the most effective tools."

In addition, immediately following coverage by international and national media, organizations often raise a lot of funds. Opportunities such as these with the press often comes following only a major crisis or incident, for example, the family separation crisis[30] or during the arrival of the migrant caravans crisis[92].

  "And so when, and then in 2018, when the whole family separation crisis happened, we helped this giant giant rally. So both of those brought like thousands of people out and a lot of media coverage. Whenever that happened. we tended to get a whole whole lot of people starting Facebook fundraisers for cert and a huge spike in like followers and engagement." - P14

  "Long before I came to Tia's had already had articles in the New York Times on CNN on NBC, they'd already been in the big media. And that continues, you know, it's kind of slow down. Now of course that the border is Closed. But when the border was open, it was almost a full time job for me to keep the national and international media scheduled with the tears. And they try to speak to media as much as they can, because we want to get the word out about what's happening down here." - P11

  "I think in terms of fundraising is really, you know, what has helped us most is newspaper articles about our outreach" - P4

One organization I spoke to employed an offline-online strategy that was an online fundraiser with an offline component. They hosted a fundraising dinner that donors may buy tickets to. However, in addition to having people at the fundraising, they also sold tickets called "solidarity tickets" online for those that just wanted to donate but not actually attend the dinner.

  "I mean, the bulk of the fundraising aspect happens online, right, like so we have a lot of people who fund who give or like buy like we have, we have something that we call like a solidarity ticket, which is like you buy a ticket to the dinner then you don't come you're like basically like, just giving some money. Um, and like that actually goes quite well as well. I think that some part of it is like that translation. Like the fundraising is happening online and there is an in person component. I think that that helps make people feel connected. " - P17

Figure 4.16: Flyers for fundraisers created by various organizations. Images courtesy of the *Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers and Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees.*

Another offline-online tandem strategy that was prevalent was to give donors something small and tangible in the real world to thank them for their donation. I found 2 organizations that had this strategy.

> "I think a strategy that I've seen in the past that we're kind of looking into for how we move forward with digital fundraising is having something tangible for example, like you give and then you get a sticker or like, you get something in the mail." - P17

> "Then at the end of the year, we send everyone thank you letters and our staff We do this big staff thing where we print out all the letters and then we all write like thank yous handwritten, to make people like, oh, like they're, you know, it's very personal to them." - P14

4.7.3   Offline Fundraising

Offline fundraising, though time and cost intensive [121], is still one of the foremost ways of fundraising for a few organizations. As mentioned in the previous section, offline connections are significant to online fundraising meaning that they must be strategically to supplement the latter. However, in smaller communities especially those consisted of an older population, I found that this was the foremost method of fundraising. Figure 4.16 shows some flyers created for offline fundraising events by organizations.

4.7.4   Summary

In this section, I detailed how organizations were accruing funds for their effective functioning. Here, I summarize some of the tools and techniques used by organizations in order to raise funds.

- Organizations raise funds both online through crowdfunding or offline through traditional methods.

- Online, organizations use four main ways to raise funds namely - Online fundraising platforms, Online Toolsets, Social Media Platforms and Email.

- Several external factors have influence fundraising such as the institution of the separation policy, the remain in Mexico policy, the attention of national and international media or even large public rallies.

- Organizations also acknowledged using narrative empathy to fund raise.

- Some organizations employ online-offline strategies where they send tokens to their donors who contributed online.

- Organizations also organized fun offline events.

Chapter 5

Discussion

I now discuss the main takeaways of my research. In this chapter, we discuss the particularities of space (location where help is administered) and time that influence social media and technology design decisions during a citizen led response to crisis situations. In addition, I also discuss the impact of stories and how they are formulated for maximum affect. Further, I discuss the implications of this on fundraising initiatives by organizations.

5.1   Social Media and Technology Design Implications

There are several issues on social media platforms that could greatly ease use by organizations. My findings provide a background for understanding the challenges faced by extending and emergent organizations. Consideration must be given to the fact that the demographics of these organizations were mostly older adults. In this section, I explore the potential design changes that would better support organizations in their crisis response.

Algorithmic Confusion One of the major findings of this study was that there are concerns around how social media's curation algorithm worked. Participants who expressed their concerns understood that posts were recommended to social media users on the basis of engagement. However, this poses a problem for non-profit organizations who require to reach more people than just those who like or follow them. Non-profit organizations usually have only a small or absolutely no advertising budget [60].

> "I think one thing that they can do is they could give nonprofit organizations more reach with their posts. Because you know, if you look at a nonprofit organization who sets up a page on Facebook as a essentially a business page. And if you just, if you just make a post and put it out there into the Facebook only a very tiny percentage of the people who follow your page will see that, like 2% or something like that unless you pay money to boost the post and get in front of more people. I know probably their algorithms (promote) whatever makes people stay on Facebook more but if there was some way for them to give nonprofit organizations more reach without them having to pay as much as businesses do. I think that would be fabulous." - P3

This was echoed in findings from a previous study by Hou et al. where non-profit organizations complained about Facebook's user feed algorithm which requires the organization to pay money in order to boost their content.

One participant observed that their increased frequency of posting positively affected their posts' visibility. However, even a brief period of time when the organizations do not post, the 'counter' is reset and their posts no longer gain the same visibility.

> "Since I've been at capacity, I haven't been posting as regularly. Whereas when we post like, to what seemed like too many times, like 10 times a day, it's like Facebook's algorithms keeps whatever you post higher up. And if we don't post anything over the weekend, it kind of resets and on Monday, we have to kind of start building that snowball again. So I I think that what may be happening this week, we weren't as consistent. And last two weeks." - P12

Because of the opaque nature of news feed curation algorithms [36], organizations are unable to utilize these systems to their full potential. This shows the needs for social media platforms need to be cognizant of the needs of non-profit organizations and social movements. In addition, it also calls for the need for careful observation of post related statistics provided by social media platforms. This would give organizations an idea of what kind of content their circle likes to engage with and thereby reach more people.

Facebook's Restrictive Policies Organizations found Facebook's policies on sharing of posts and inviting members very restrictive. Advocacy is one of the most important functions of organizations working towards the assimilation of migrants into the US. On social media, organizations post informative content surrounding the immigration crisis. However, our participants ran into issues when sharing too many posts in a short time. I found that Facebook commonly blocks such usages of its platform [38]. P12 (of the Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition) shared his troubles with being blocked while sharing advocacy information on Facebook.

> "I would post it on our page and copy the message share that out to a bunch of different groups and sometimes Facebook thinks its like spam or a robot. It'll stop me from being able to post anywhere else." - P12

In addition, when organizations create events (such as the one mentioned in Section ??), they are unable to invite their followers or people who 'like' their page to attend the event. The user who controls the Page is allowed to invite those on his friend lists and even this had a cap on the number of invitees. For example, the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and California Immigrant Policy center often organize online events to spread awareness about the rights of undocumented migrants in their state or guides relating to the census, driving licenses etc (further described in Section ??). In order for these events to successfully serve their purpose, organizations have to invite and attract attendees. The restrictive policy of inviting attendees is currently hindering the work done by these organizations.

> "For events, I wish Facebook would have let me invite all of our people that like our page but it won't. It will only let me invite my personal friends list and it has a limit of like 500 people. And so I find that very limiting and find it really annoying." - P12

While restricting the number of posts, shares and messages is an effective way of controlling spam on Facebook, this policy hinders the work done by many advocacy organizations even those working outside the immigration area. Facebook must take into consideration that verified pages resharing posts are less likely to be spam material and possibly lift restrictions placed on non-profit and advocacy organizations.

P12 also believed that Facebook is designed to keep all business conducted through Facebook on Facebook. For example, Facebook Business Pages allow their administrators to post jobs on the organization's behalf. However, when the link is clicked, Facebook allows the candidate to apply without a resume and other critical information requested by the organization instead providing them with a history of jobs the candidate listed on Facebook. Also, Facebook disallows the addition of an email ID associated with the job posting restricting the organization to only Facebook for the application process.

> " It seems like Facebook's algorithms want you to stay within the Facebook ecosystem. So for like job postings, I usually post a job and then Facebook lets them just click to apply. And they don't have to submit a resume, they don't submit any of the things that we were asking for. It just sends us like their job history according to Facebook and some people didn't put anything on there. So we have to follow up with them and say, "Hey, if you want to be considered please like submit your information to this email that we have." Facebook won't let us post that email in that job posting. So I have to work around it by saying jobs and then instead of the '@' symbol I put in parentheses and then ColoradoImmigrant.org and then I also tried to started posting "Please don't post don't apply via Facebook apply via email below". And then it seemed when I started doing that Facebook's algorithm made it so nobody saw those job postings at all. So it's kind of a learning moment like, "Oh, they just, they want to keep us in this ecosystem"." - P12

Facebook is the most important tool used by the organizations that I spoke with during this study. They depend heavily on Facebook from coordination all the way to donations. Restrictive policies such as the ones detailed in this section directly impacts their day-to-day operations. The restriction on the number of posts and messages in a short period of time impacts the number of people that the organization reaches in a day. It is also important to note that many people volunteer their time with organizations and therefore require to finish tasks in a short amount of time.

5.2 Adoption of Social Media and Technology by Older Adults

In this section, I discuss issues that older adults faced while performing tasks for their organizations using social media sites and other technological solutions. This section is divided into two parts - one dedicated to issues faced on social media and the second to online technological solution.

As mentioned previously (in Section 3.2), the demography of organizations in this study are older adults. I found that the individuals found it difficult to use some particular features of social media. These features could potentially be very useful to organizations greatly reducing the time and effort that they put into coordination. In the area of coordination, I found organizations using Facebook posts to sign up volunteers instead of using a 'calendar' application or an online sign up portal such as SignUpGenius. There are two potential reasons for the reluctance in adopting new technologies in their work - disinterest in the new technology [59] or difficulty/reluctance in adapting to the new technology[65].

A study by Jung et al. [65] suggests that issues of difficulty or reluctance in adapting to new technology could be alleviated by having useful tutorials on the website. For example, Facebook could add easy-to-follow prompts or tutorials that would make older users more confidence in their use of the platform. One participant also expressed concerns on how much the platform changes on a regular basis and requires them to be very nimble.

P11 reported difficulty working with the Instagram platform that only allowed posting through their mobile application. However, other platforms that are used by the organizations permit posting through the web page causing a lot of back and forth between the user's laptop and mobile phone. Citing their age and issues with vision, P11 told us that they would prefer if they could work through platforms on a laptop.

Social media platforms should be more cognizant of the demographics that use them.

5.3   Storytelling

In this study, I found that organizations saw a benefit from using stories to convey the suffering and pain of migrants to people. Storytelling formed an important part of organizations' advocacy work as well as for their fundraising initiatives. However, we found organizations often had contradicting beliefs as to how the stories should be composed and shared. One of the main point of contention was the sharing of sensitive, intimate and oftentimes disturbing details from the lives of the migrants'. While storytelling has been recognized by previous literature[69] as a very powerful medium for invoking empathy and sympathy. However, Keen suggests that sometimes, when presented with a very disturbing account, the empathetic response could go into overdrive and creates personal distress. This in turn, causes the person to turn away from the issue. This means that if a person were to be presented with disturbing images, they may no longer be able to engage with the cause. However, in contrast, some of the most iconic images that were the face of humanitarian crises such as those of the 'Napalm Girl', Alan Kurdi and Omran Daqneesh. These images captured the attention of the world. Right now, there is not much research to determine how much is too much information to provide to people so as to not throw their empathy into override.

Another area where technology can contribute to storytelling is through provocative game design [87]. Scenario based journeys of migrants could help raise awareness through lived-experience. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) created an ap-

plication called 'My Life as a Refugee'[137]. In this application, you can follow one of three refugees who are fleeing their homes and have to make several decisions each of which could impact their lives. However this application is not very popular with only 10,000 dowloands on the Google Playstore. In addition, this application has not been studied for its efficacy in terms of its impact on people. Further studies must delve into these 'lived-experience' applications that can help simulate the terrifying situations that migrants are and the impossible decisions they are having to make on their way to the United States.

5.4 Fundraising for Emergent and Extending Organizations Online

Fundraising, I observed through the interviews, was one of the major concerns for the communications experts in the organizations. They made sure that their posts not only had an impact but an actionable impact. Through the interviews, I understood that while organizations had some idea of what constituted a good fundraiser, they did not have any strategies that they normally followed. There was a clear need for organizations to understand how to produce emotional responses in their potential donors to convert them into active donors. For example, I observed, during my qualitative analysis, many organizations using negative appeals, i.e., showing potential donors what the situation of the migrants would be if they did not intervene. However, few organizations chose to use positive appeals, i.e., showing potential donors what the situation would be if they intervene. These appeals are also known to produce a positive response in potential donors and prior studies have shown a connection between happiness and positive donation behaviour.

Finally, I believe that extending and emergent organizations must adapt to all the tools available to them to fundraise online. However, many of these tools are not perfect and users struggle to use them. For example, the fundraisers on Facebook disallow organizations that are not verified to fundraise on their platform. While this is a valid setting, they do not inform the organizations thereof very clearly. This makes organizations turn away from using certain platforms to fundraise even after obtaining the 'verified' status.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This research study serves three main purposes. The first purpose of this study is to provide a situated account of how organizations work to serve migrants in the US. The second purpose was to understand the shortcomings of today's technology and social media platforms in supporting citizen responses. The third purpose of this work is to highlight the care-work and invisible-work that is instrumental in these crisis response situations that are currently not being supported by technology. This study was conducted through a qualitative analysis of social media posts by participating organizations and through semi-structured interviews with volunteers/members in these organizations.

To conclude, I revisit the research questions that I started with and summarize how I answered them.

6.1   Research Questions

6.1.1   RQ1: What are the ways in which organizations helping migrants in the US? What acts of care and invisible work can be observed in the work of organizations?

This question was answered using a combination of qualitative analyses of organizations' social media pages and through the semi-structured interview. Organizations help migrants' in several ways, through several avenues and in several settings.

I found organizations providing essential services at bus stations. One of the main findings in this area was the network of organizations that coordinated with each other (dubbed the 'Overground Railroad') and provided migrants with food, clothing, medication and other essential supplies. I also found organizations that were working on both sides of the US-Mexico border offering people in the migrant camps not only essential products but also services such as legal help, ESL classes, doctors and therapists. In addition to this organizations found ways to contribute through visitation at immigrant detention centers providing commissary and phone money and helping them pass messages on to their families. In addition, organizations also actively involved in advocacy work by providing the migrants a voice at policy discussions, organizing and attending rallies, etc.

Acts of care emerged all through the crisis landscape in this study. There were several

instances of invisible work also. Organizations that provided essentials to the migrants had to have their volunteers/members go through a long process of mobilizing resources and putting together the care-packages (called 'packing parties') that are distributed to the migrants. The day-to-day operations of coordination, including those of packing parties is not adequately supported by technology. Another way organizations display care is by making sure that none of the resources, even useless, go to waste. One organization reported that they created a mutual aid network in their city enabling them to donate resources that they do not need. Social media platforms such as Facebook should consider connecting charitable organizations at local areas so that they may set up mutual aid networks. Finally, I learnt that people tried to contribute in any way that they possibly can. Using swap events that took place at a local library, one participant told us that they swapped their items for items that may be useful to migrants. These swap events could be held online enabling more individuals to participate.

The findings in this section helped provide context to the findings in the rest of the study. In addition, I hoped that these findings would provide a background to designers when creating applications to aid citizens' response to crisis situations.

6.1.2 RQ2: How are social media and technological systems helping organizations in their day-to-day and advocacy efforts?

Organizations, because of their varied modes of contribution, have several day-to-day operations that require support. We found that social media and technological systems are supporting activities such as information exchange, information storage, volunteer sign ups and coordination. Most organizations that participated in this study relied heavily on Facebook for each of these activities. Other platforms that supported organizations were - Slack, Signal, Whatsapp Messenger, Facebook Messenger, Calendar Application (Android/iOS) and Google Spreadsheets. One of the key findings in this section was the reliance of my participants on Facebook even though there were more suitable applications. For example, even though a platform like SignUpGenius or even the Calendar application would be appropriate choices for volunteer sign ups, organizations preferred use Facebook to do this. It is interesting to note that the organization does not send out reminders whereas the platforms do have the capability. This reluctance, I found, was for two reasons. One participant told me that they tried to set it up themselves but were unable to do so. In another case, an organization's entire Calendar was accidentally deleted when a volunteer mistook the common calendar for their personal one. Similar to this, I found organizations using Facebook as a 'one-stop-shop' in place of more appropriate technology. Social media, Facebook in particular, have become hosts to many emergent and extending organizations and must be cognizant of their needs while designing Group and Page features. Outreach and advocacy efforts by emergent and extending organizations was a mixture of online and offline media. Offline, they relied on local and national media such as newspapers and TV News organizations. Online, organizations primarily used 4 means to espouse their cause - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and

their website. Once again, Facebook was the most frequently and widely used platform for outreach and advocacy efforts. This is due to the fact that Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the US[109]. Though most organizations only had membership on Facebook, organizations that did have a presence on more than one platform tried to utilize them differently. For example, one organization used Facebook to reach out to its community and Twitter to reach out to journalists and lawmakers in the area. While trying to answer this question, I learnt that organizations needed to learn how to use post statistics provided to them by social media platforms to gain maximum visibility. In addition, I also learnt that there were many theories as to how participants of this study believed social media feed algorithms worked and expressed the need for not-for-profit organizations to be featured prominently. The Facebook Live feature and Zoom (and sometimes Skype) were also used to replace conferences that generally occurred every year to review policy priorities in organizations because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.1.3   RQ3: How are social media and technological systems helping organizations raise funds? What role does storytelling have in organizations' fundraising efforts?

Fundraising in extending and emerging organizations happens online through crowdfunding or offline through traditional methods. Online, organizations use four main ways to raise funds namely - Online fundraising platforms, Online Toolsets, Social Media Platforms and Email. Contrary to my expectation, online toolsets and emails were the most commonly used methods of fundraising online. Online toolsets such as ActionNetwork and ActBlue handles phone campaigns and other advocacy efforts in addition to being a fundraising tool. These tools are able to handle more than one task and therefore are popular among organizations. In addition, these toolsets allowed organizations to access contact information of their donors allowing them to contact them once again soliciting donations. Previous literature has shown that the appeals are a very essential part to a successful fundraiser. Through interviews, I learnt that many organizations do not associate the stories (RQ5) in fundraisers even though they acknowledge that it may have a positive effect. In addition, I observed during qualitative analysis that organizations largely used negative appeals in order to raise funds. However, literature has shown that positive appeals can also have a similar if not better effect on reaching fundraising goals. Several external factors have influence fundraising such as the institution of the separation policy, the remain in Mexico policy, the attention of national and international media or even large public rallies. In addition, trust is a very important factor to fundraising. One organization reported that the connections they made offline were the most important reason they are able to successfully raise funds. Other organizations employed an offline-online strategy to fundraising by sending offline tokens to their donors in order to acknowledge their contributions.

All the organizations that I spoke to acknowledged the importance of sharing stories in order to raise awareness about the plight of the migrants in the US and during their journey. Even

though very few organizations actually shared stories on their public groups, most groups believed in the power of narrative empathy. I learnt that they saw a key difference between stories that are told to the organizations by the migrants versus the stories that organizations shared after meeting with the migrants. Organizations were more open to sharing the latter than the former. One important finding that I stumbled upon while I tried to answer this question is that there was a fine line between what organizations felt was unacceptable and acceptable in a story. While some organizations felt that it was warranted to present the whole gory truth, some others preferred to tone-down the stories before they were shared. For example, one organization was chastised for sharing a heartbreaking picture of a father and his toddler daughter laying dead face-down in the Rio Grande river. I found that more in-depth study is required in order to understand where the line must be drawn in presenting stories to the public. Other than this, another concern for organizations is the fact that migrants were a vulnerable population. This means that their identities, stories, images and any other identifiable information must be protected. Even though technology has presented organizations with a way to anonymize information, I found that there are limitations. For example, organizations exclusively used their phones for photo editing tools and had to send images and information back and forth between their phones and laptops via email. Participants, especially older, found it difficult to operate their forms in this capacity.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

- What is your role in the organization?

- Why did you join the organization? If you joined, how did you learn of the organization?

- Could you talk me through the onboarding and vetting process of your organization?

- Can you take us through a day of you work with the organization?

- Would you be able to talk us through your Facebook feed?

- How do you use Facebook, Instagram and Twitter differently for your organization?

- How do you coordinate with your team and share duties?

- What are the various ways you are using social media to reach out to your community?

- Can you describe the ways in which you raise funds for the organization?

- How are you retelling the stories of these asylum seekers? How do your followers react and respond to the stories?

- How do you measure success? How do you know a social media strategy is working?