Facebook as a multi-tool for public engagement and mobilizing
– Insights into the new world of online activism

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Abstract

The upswing of social media in recent years has altered the field of environmental communication and facilitated a more widespread conversation about environmental issues. Facebook and other social media have opened up a lot of new possibilities for online campaigning and engaging with the public. So how are NGOs using Facebook to engage the public in environmental campaigns? In this study I will try to answer this question by an exploratory study of Sweden's largest ENGO Swedish Society for Nature Conservation's (Naturskyddsföreningen) campaign "Byt till eko" (or "Switch to Organic" in free translation).

Other studies and theories on social media, campaigns, and engaging the public show that the world of today, with a more individualized society as well as a more digital one, has serious implications for NGOs and how they can and should work to engage supporters. Social media can be a great tool to mobilize people and with individualized options for engagement, the chance of success is enhanced.

With the help of other studies and theories on social media and engagement, I have analyzed and discussed the strategy and practice of SSNC on Facebook. I have found that they use Facebook in multiple ways: to inform, engage, empower, and mobilize. They have targeted both consumers and grocery stores, and during the campaign, organic consumption has risen faster in Sweden than other comparable countries; although it is hard to assess how much impact the Switch to Organic campaign had on the increase. I argue that Facebook is an important platform for mobilizing and engaging, with its many connections between people and its built-in features for instant sharing of content between all of those connected people.

Keywords: ENGO, NGO, social media, Facebook, environmental communication, online campaign, public engagement, mobilization, weak ties

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Abbreviations and technical terms

Clicktivism	Simple online activism, based on the simple movement of clicking a button
Comment	To write a comment on a specific post on a social media site
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organization
Follower	Someone who has chosen to receive updates from a certain person or organization on a social media site
Hashtag (#)	A word or phrase with the hash character before (e.g. #TimeToAct) that becomes a searchable metadata tag on many social media sites
Like	To click the "like" button on a Facebook post, generally meaning one supports the contents of that post
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Share	To pass a post along to one's own followers on a social media site
Slacktivism	Similar to clicktivism (see above), often used as a derogatory term
SSNC	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (Naturskyddsföreningen)
Web 2.0	Websites that contain user-generated content and opportunities for interaction between users

1 A new landscape for environmental communication and public engagement

The world changes constantly. As humans, we may notice the small, sudden changes, but it is harder to see the big, slow changes that may take one or a few decades to settle in. It is easy to underestimate the development of new technology and the impact it will have on our society, as when Sweden's then minister of communication Ines Uusmann in 1996 famously predicted that the internet was a passing phenomenon (Treijs, 2016).

   The upswing of the interactive web (often termed Web 2.0) and social media in recent years has facilitated a much more widespread conversation about environmental issues. Indeed as Cox states (2013, p 183):

   "In the last five to seven years, social media have dramatically altered the landscape for environmental communication. [...] At its core, Web 2.0 is a shift from a one-way, elite news media to a participatory model of content generation and sharing."

The internet offers tools that reduce the costs of mobilizing supporters, maintaining activist networks and employing varying tactics in social movements (see also Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch, 2015). The most important difference that Web 2.0, and in particular social networking sites, has brought about for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) lies in the increased opportunity to gain support for their campaigns: they can potentially reach a much larger crowd than their usual supporters and engage them as active supporters of the campaign (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015).

   Just as Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch (2015) describe, social media has arguably enabled NGOs to transform passive supporters of environmental campaigns to more active participants. This shift from passive supporters to active participants among the wider public is also described by Cox, who states that social media are commonly used by Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs) to engage and mobilize the general public as well as their regular supporters (Cox, 2013), a view that I agree with.

   Social media has facilitated new ways for NGOs to engage with the public in environmental campaigns. This new arena for public engagement has led the study of environmental communication into new directions. Studies in the field have explored e.g.: 1) how activist organizations utilize social media to reach a larger portion of the public (Kavada, 2012; Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015); 2) different ways to use Web 2.0 to enhance environmental communication (Cox, 2013); and, 3) how civic engagement has changed in general (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, 2012). Still, the way NGOs use the particular social media site Facebook is still relatively unexplored.

   Among other social media sites, Facebook is particularly interesting. It has an enormous amount of users across the world - 1.59 billion monthly active users as of December 31st, 2015 (Facebook, n.d.). It is the dominating social network in Sweden: almost everyone who visits any social network visits Facebook; and on average, Swedes who use social media spend almost one hour per day on social media (Findahl & Davidsson, 2015). Moreover, Facebook has become an important part of many ENGOs online presences (Cox, 2013).

Therefore I will try to answer the following research question: **How are NGOs using Facebook to engage the public in environmental campaigns?**

In this study I will try to answer this question by exploring the Facebook posts within the campaign "Byt till eko" ("Switch to Organic" in free translation) by Sweden's largest ENGO, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). I will also use a previous interview with the campaign manager for said campaign. By analyzing the actions of SSNC on Facebook and comparing that to strategies and theories on social media and public engagement by other scholars, I will assess how SSNC uses Facebook to engage the public.

In the next section (2) I will discuss current research about the use of social media in environmental communication. I will use this section to position my own research as an exploration of the relatively new world of online engagement. In section 3 I will describe and motivate my research methods. Then in section 4 I will present the data from the interview, including SSNC's campaign strategy, and the data from the analyzed Facebook posts and comments. My analysis indicate that SSNC uses Facebook in multiple ways: both to inform, empower and mobilize. In section 5 I will discuss the findings of my study and compare it to other studies and theories on social media. I will argue that SSNC managed to get people engaged by providing information, empowerment, multiple options for action, and by framing the issue as a challenge on which the individual could have a direct impact. Lastly in section 6, the conclusion, I will present my main findings and assess their relevance.

2 Social media use in environmental campaigns

This section is made up of seven subsections (2.1-2.7) where I will describe concepts and strategies that I will use in my analysis and well as some examples of other social media campaigns. This first part serves as an introduction.

Social media can be used in many ways that are relevant for ENGOs: communicating, organizing, mobilizing, informing etc. Robert Cox is an influential scholar within Environmental Communication who has studied public engagement in environmental issues for many years. Recently he has proposed six concepts that can be used to analyze social media use within environmental communication. In section 2.1 I summarize these, since they are all relevant for ENGOs.

In section 2.2 I mix some concepts from Cox and other authors about advocacy campaign strategies that can be used in social media campaigns. As I see it, social media is a suitable medium for putting pressure on the decision makers, or "primary audience" (Cox, 2013, p 218) by mobilizing the public, or "secondary audience"[1] (Cox, 2013, p 218) to voice their opinions in a simple and fast way that reaches the primary audience right away, and has the potential to create a big wave of pressure. In fact, the popular online action network Avaaz uses social media exactly in this way, even if email is even more important than social media in their campaigning (see more on Avaaz in section 2.5) (Kavada, 2012).

Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch (2015) describe a way to compose a campaign strategy out of three parts that they see as essential for a successful campaign (which I will explain in section 2.2). The last one – mobilizing structure – is particularly interesting, since social media can be great tool to help create such a structure. Indeed, much of this mobilizing structure is already in place, as evident in the Greenpeace campaign Unfriend Coal, which mainly used Facebook as an organizing and mobilizing tool (more on that in section 2.4).

Next, in section 2.3, I discuss Putnam's (1995) observations of a decline in civil society and Bennett and Segerberg's (2012, 2011) ideas about how a more individualized society has changed the ways NGOs should work to engage the public, as well as Granovetter's (1973) theory of weak ties. I then move on to describe some examples of social media campaigns, starting with section 2.4 and the Unfriend Coal Facebook campaign in which Greenpeace used social media in a new, progressive way to engage and organize the public to put pressure on Facebook. In section 2.5 the practices of Avaaz are described, since they are an important organization in the new online activism world where they are one of the most successful players. The effects of different ways of interacting with the public through social media campaigns are described in section 2.6, and some critique and defense of online activism is presented in section 2.7.

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[1] Primary and secondary audience will be further explained in section 2.2.

2.1   Six functions of social media

Cox (2013, pp 184-191) divides the use of social media into six different functions that are relevant for environmental communication: 1) "environmental information and buzz", 2) "green communities and social networking", 3) "reporting and documenting", 4) "public criticism and accountability", 5) "mobilizing", and 6) "micro-volunteering and self-organizing". *Environmental information and buzz* is about using one of the most basic functions of social media – the ability to share news stories and information with others. Organizations as well as individuals can share content between each other, publicly or privately. *Green communities and social networking:* for many NGOs, social media has become an important tool to communicate with their supporters and others, and also to enhance communication between their supporters – creating a community where they and their supporters can interact with each other. *Reporting and documenting* refers to smartphone and web applications that ordinary citizens can use to report and document environmental observations, with everything from oil spills to monitoring of certain species. *Public criticism and accountability:* by using social media to criticize and shame governments, corporations and other actors when they are not acting in an environmentally friendly way, NGOs can potentially reach much further than with traditional media. *Mobilizing:* NGOs and other activist groups today often use social media to mobilize supporters for an environmental cause. *Micro-volunteering and self-organizing:* there are websites and mobile applications which allow people to find small tasks that can be performed to help different environmental causes, for example green shopping guides. Self-organizing sites include for example petitions sites, where anyone can start a petition for a good cause, and other sites one can use to engage others for a specific cause via social media. (Cox, 2013)

2.2   Advocacy campaign strategies

Advocacy campaigns are an important tool for environmental organizations to influence public opinion (Cox, 2013). A broad definition for such a campaign is: "a strategic course of action, involving communication, which is undertaken for a specific purpose" (Cox, 2013, p 213). A campaign strategy can be seen as made up out of three parts: 1) set a goal and create public support for it, 2) identify the decision makers who can realize that goal – *the primary audience* – and mobilize relevant supporters who can hold the decision makers accountable – *the secondary audience*, and 3) identify what will make the decision makers act upon your goal and come up with a strategy to influence them (Cox, 2013).

   When planning a campaign, one can divide it up into three important structures that need to be in place to be able to successfully mobilize supporters (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015): 1) *contextual information:* scientific information about the issue, details about policies, possible solutions and its costs and benefits, as well as information about stakeholders in the issue; this is important so that the potential supporter can get a comprehension of the issue in a bigger context and decide on the importance of it, 2) *empowerment:* to enhance people's belief that their actions can make a difference, both by appealing to emotions and use empowering rhetoric, but also practically by suggesting concrete actions, and 3) *mobilizing structures:* the organizing of social movement and networks around an issue, as well as the actual actions that are available to the supporters. (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015)

   Framing is another aspect of mobilization which is always important when it comes to environmental communication. It is a reasonable assumption that in order to reach out successfully to potential supporters, the framing of the issue(s) should ideally coincide with how these potential supporters view the issue. Frames can be grouped into three groups of values that are relevant here, using Cox' (2013) classification: 1) *egoistic concerns* that focus on one's own health, convenience etc, 2) *social-altruistic concerns* – concerns about other people, and 3) *biospheric concerns* – concern for other living things, like animals and

plants. How someone frames an issue is of course different for different people, so it might be a good idea to use multiple frames to appeal to as many as possible.

All of these concepts and frames will be used in the analysis of the SSNC campaign.

2.3   A more individualized society and its implications for NGOs

Putnam (1995) writes about the decline of civic engagement that seems to have occurred since the 1960's. He points out that while memberships of traditional organizations like e.g. labor unions has declined, large environmental and feminist organizations increased their membership base in the 1970s and 1980s; but argues that the latter kind of membership most often consists of just paying the membership fee and occasionally reading a newsletter, while seldom visiting any meetings (Putnam, 1995).

Two decades later, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) are exploring how this shift in civil society has developed – they perceive a shift in industrial democracies concerning personal identity: group membership is less important than before to people in these countries and one's identity is more individualized, rather than connected to a certain group. Collective identities through for example political parties and ideologies have, for the younger generations, given way to individual identities and "engagement with politics as an expression of personal hopes, lifestyles, and grievances" (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, p 743).

Bennett and Segerberg (2012) argue that a more individualized world also has changed the way people want to engage with NGOs and other political organizations:

> "Individuals are relating differently to organized politics, and many organizations are finding they must engage people differently: they are developing relationships to publics as affiliates rather than members, and offering them personal options in ways to engage and express themselves." (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, pp 759-760)

A more individualized society, Bennett and Segerberg (2012) say, means that people are less willing to become a fully devoted member of an organization and let that organization decide on collective actions: instead many people, especially younger ones, want to decide for themselves how to get involved and act on certain issues. Many choose to display their support for certain issues through lifestyle choices: e.g. by fair trade consumption, fashion choices, leisure activities and even friend networks (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011).

The individualization and globalization of both economic and social issues are related to the fact that political issues are more and more interwoven – labor rights and human rights for example, or economic development and environmental issues – and these connections of issues cut right across many of the traditional social movements (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011). All this, the connection of issues and individualization of society, means that organizations need to offer opportunities for more individualized action as well as broader definitions of the issues they work with (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011). Being an activist myself, I recognize what they describe and agree that civic society has changed. I also see that there is still a lot of strong engagement out there: I see the new, individualized type Bennett and Segerberg describe but also the traditional type of offline engagement with memberships in organizations that one identifies with, joining meetings and other activities. An example of this is People's Climate March, organized by ENGO 350.org (Brodine, 2014) which took place in New York in September 2014 where it drew about 311 000 people to the streets to call for more action on the issue of climate change (Foderaro, 2014). There were also similar demonstrations in many other cities across the world on the same day (Foderaro, 2014). This shows that offline actions still can draw huge crowds. That makes me hypothesize that perhaps Putnam's observations of a decline in civil society was more like a remodeling of civic engagement: the internet and social media has certainly offered new ways to engage and mobilize people. This notion can be supported by Granovetter's theory of weak ties, which I explain below.

In Granovetter's (1973, 1983) theory of weak ties he argues that *weak ties* (acquaintances) are more important than *strong ties* (close friends) for the dissemination of information within a society, since weak ties are more likely to act like *bridges* between different groups; our weak ties are less likely to already be involved with each other than our strong ties. The implication of a society with many weak ties is that ideas and information can spread more quickly if these weak ties act as bridges that can disclose ideas between groups (Granovetter, 1983). Social media like Facebook typically contains many weak ties and thus contribute to fast dissemination of ideas and information, making it a good platform for mobilization. The implications of a more individualized society are important to consider in campaign strategies for NGOs, and I will use this view in my discussions of SSNC's actions on Facebook in section 5 and 6.

2.4   Example 1: Greenpeace "Unfriend Coal" Facebook campaign

In this section I will illustrate the effect of social media on NGOs based on a study that focused on Greenpeace. I take this example because the campaign is similar to the SSNC campaign that I study, and it also illustrates an important shift in campaign strategies enabled by social media.

Internet and web 2.0 has brought about a significant change in the tactics employed by Greenpeace in its campaigns, the most important being the role of the supporters: with the upswing of interactive websites and social media, Greenpeace started to utilize those tools to target the general public and not just their core supporters. Furthermore, the public was no longer targeted as passive supporters – instead they were invited to take part of campaign activities. (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015)

In February 2010 Greenpeace launched its first Facebook campaign, i.e. a campaign that mainly used Facebook as a communication channel and mobilizing tool. The objective of the campaign was to pressure Facebook into stop using coal power as its energy supply. To do this, they created a fan page on Facebook as well as a website and some YouTube videos. The campaign went on for 22 months, but it was only in January 2011 that the official, international Facebook campaign page was launched: before that there were multiple pages for different regions. The official Unfriend Coal Facebook page got over 184 000 likes and the median of likes for an individual Facebook post was 370 likes while the median for comments on a post was 38. The content of the posts included contextual information about Facebook in 38% of the cases, 40% included broad context information (mostly regarding energy consumption in the IT sector), 49% had an explicit call to action (most commonly to like the Facebook page or to share the content with others), 22% reported about campaign activities undertaken by supporters, and 24% included positive statements towards Facebook. Greenpeace also used Facebook events to engage their followers, two examples include trying to set a world record of comments on a single Facebook posts and a competitions where you could upload a photo that showed your support for the campaign. Two interesting findings here include the fact that none of the Facebook posts encouraged the supporters to take part in any offline activities, and none of the posts called for a boycott or similar actions against Facebook – instead positive reinforcements seem to have been employed as a tactic, for example with posts encouraging Facebook to "like renewable". (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015)

In this campaign, Greenpeace used social media as a complement to news media, rather than as a substitute, with campaigners regularly reporting to news media about the campaign. The affordances of Facebook (such as likes, shares, and events) were used in a novel way to form e-tactics to mobilize and organize the supporters of the campaign into action; this shows the new role of the supporter in Greenpeace campaigns as an active participant. Even though Facebook was an important part of the campaign tactics, more traditional Greenpeace campaign tactics like private negotiations with Facebook and offline protests complemented it. The campaign proved successful and Facebook was eventually

forced to cooperate with Greenpeace in creating new energy policies. (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch, 2015)

2.5   Example 2: Avaaz – an online global action network

Here I describe another example. In contrast to Greenpeace, Avaaz is a newer organization that has used online resources from the beginning, building its entire existence on these tools. With this example I wish to show how effective online activism can be.

Avaaz describes themselves as "a global web movement to bring people-powered politics to decision-making everywhere" (*About Us*, n.d.). They have more than 43 million members worldwide (*Avaaz - The World In Action*, n.d.) from 194 different countries, as of March 18th 2016 (*About Us*, n.d.). They were founded in 2007 with the mission to organize people in the pursuit of creating a better world, and work with global, regional and local issues ranging from environmental issues such as climate change, to social and peace issues like poverty and conflicts (*About Us*, n.d.). Their methods include online petitions, media campaigns, organizing mass emails and calls to decision makers, direct action, lobbying, offline protest events – and they also encourage members to start their own petitions (*About Us*, n.d.).

From Avaaz' launch as a small group of online organizers, it has grown to become "the globe's largest and most powerful online activist network" as Pilkington (2012) puts it. One of their co-founders claims that their model of raising money online and using the web to mobilize people for offline protests is much faster and more effective than any other way. They also regularly ask their members to take online polls to advise Avaaz on what its members want it to do and be. (Pilkington, 2012)

The core of Avaaz' organization is its email list of members, to which emails are sent out in 14 different languages. Its webpage operates in 15 languages and their presence on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube is also important as a means to find new supporters and scale up their campaigns. The most common calls to action from Avaaz to its members and supporters are to sign an online petition or donate a small amount towards a specific cause. Using the internet also allows Avaaz to take advantage of major news stories to get the public's attention, as its structure lets them shift focus in an instant. (Kavada, 2012)

Although Avaaz' social media sites help them gain support for their campaigns, they do not facilitate much collaboration between Avaaz' members. This is a strategic choice from Avaaz' side; maintaining a more interactive and participatory model would be very resource intensive, and the organization instead chose a more centralized operation base as that would be more effective in mass mobilizing. (Kavada, 2012).

2.6   Other examples of campaigns that use social media

The following two examples provide important insights on how social media can be used to mobilize people effectively through different ways of interaction.

The Facebook campaign for Barack Obama in the U.S. 2012 presidential election, although not an environmental campaign, is still interesting considering the widespread opinion that the campaign was revolutionary in its use of social media (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015). Gerodimos and Justinussen (2015) do not agree with this perception: in their analysis of the Obama campaign Facebook posts they find that "the entire discourse of the campaign [...] was close-ended, promotional, and highly guarded or controlled" (p 123) without providing opportunities for substantive debates or engagement. Although the Facebook campaign was helpful in mobilizing new Obama supporters, it did not facilitate much political discussion and engagement with political issues (Gerodimos & Justinussen, 2015). This shows that firstly, not all social media use invites to interaction and discussion,

and secondly, even when social media is not used to truly interact with the public, it can still be an effective tool to gain new supporters.

   Bennett and Segerberg (2011) have investigated the online presence of two different protest coalitions (*Put People First* and *Meltdown*) that organized protest marches during the G20 London Summit in 2009, and what implications their different approaches to engage with people had for each coalition. What they found is that the coalition that offered more individualized action and personalized communication, including more choices on how to act and interact with them online, gained a stronger network (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011). These findings suggest that NGOs should offer multiple ways for the public to engage in an issue to be as successful as possible in mobilizing supporters.

2.7   Critique and defense of (simple) online activism

Online activism is sometimes referred to as "slacktivism" or "clicktivism" (simple online activism, based on the simple movement of clicking a button), often implying that this "lazy" form of online activism does not make any real difference. Some also regard it as a risk that clicktivism will expand on the expense of higher-effort activism (Karpf, 2010). However, the term "slacktivism" or "clicktivism" is defended by several scholars, e.g. Halupka (2014, p 116) who claims that clicktivism or slacktivism is a "legitimate political act" that has been depreciated by repetitive negative rhetoric. Breuer and Farooq (2012) found that online actions requiring low effort from the individual had little effect on their political participation, but that more targeted online campaigns could actually increase political interest in an individual.

   There are also other positive effects of online activism that have been observed, examples include: 1) The online sharing of videos for a good cause can motivate the viewer to find out more about the issue and also trigger other actions, for example donations (Jones, 2015), 2) Digital petitions contribute to democratic movements in that they "help build democratic political subjects" by making people feel entitled to express their opinion and claim their rights (Thimsen, 2015, p 234), 3) Breuer and Farooq (2012) found in a case study of a successful Brazilian campaign that online campaigning both helped to reduce mobilization costs and increased the number of citizens reached beyond traditional networks.

   Shulman (2009) claims that mass emails have little impact on policy making, but other studies have found simple online activism to be quite effective, e.g. Breindl (2013) who concludes that online actions can influence policy-making considerably in European law-making, even if it can be tough to accomplish concrete changes. Mass emails orchestrated by NGOs to government agencies e.g. is also criticized by Shulman (2009) for not providing much new relevant information affecting the current issue and moreover being a nuisance for the agency workers who has to go through massive amount of identical emails. I however argue that the main purpose of these emails is to raise awareness and show decision makers that many people care about the issue, and Karpf (2010) also defends mass emails in claiming that they are basically a new version of traditional tactics like postcards, letters and faxed petitions. Karpf (2010) also points out that these mass emails are one single tactic in advocacy campaigns and thus there is less need to worry about the effect of the emails alone.

   Another example is the Greenpeace campaign described in section 2.4. One of the most interesting things about it is the way Facebook was used to engage people in a way that demanded very little effort from their side – a form of clicktivism if you like – but it was still quite effective as the campaign reached its goal. This again illustrates that the potential of such low-effort activism should not be underestimated.

3   Method

This is an exploratory study of Facebook use in environmental campaigns by NGOs. To answer the research question: *How are NGOs using Facebook to engage the public in environmental campaigns*, I have chosen to focus on one NGO and their Facebook use in one specific campaign to be able to do a more thorough analysis.

The empirical data consists of a case study of a campaign by Swedish ENGO Naturskyddsföreningen (Swedish Society for Nature Conservation – SSNC). The campaign is called "Byt till eko" in Swedish, meaning "Switch to organic" in free translation. It started in mid-2013 and is still ongoing as of March 2016. I have analyzed Facebook posts from the campaign including comments to those posts. I have also used a telephone interview[2] with the campaign manager (that I performed in May 2015 for another course) about their goals and strategies for the campaign, as well as a follow-up email in April 2016. Unfortunately I was not able to do a follow-up interview. I also sent questions by email to other employees at SSNC but only got a few short answers.

There are presently (as of March 2016) 151 posts on SSNC's Facebook page than contain the campaign hashtag (#byttilleko). I have compiled all of them into a table[3] containing the date of the post as well as number of interactions (likes, shares and comments) for each post, and then analyzed 15 of them (10% of the total amount of posts). The reason for focusing on these 15 posts instead of analysing them all was to be able to do a deeper analysis of each post. To get an overview of the entire campaign, I randomly selected three posts from each six-month period of the campaign (except for the first half of 2015 and 2016, where I selected two and one post respectively, because of the lower number of posts during these periods). I selected the top post separately, so that post has not been selected randomly. The reason for this was that since it had more than five times the amount of interactions compared to the second most popular post, it was too important not to analyze. By looking at relatively few posts from the whole campaign period I was hoping to get both depth and breadth in the analysis.

For each Facebook post, I have looked at and analyzed the text in the post, the picture/video in the cases where there was one, and some of the comments, including SSNC's reply to the comments. In total, I have read and re-read around 10 to 20 comments for each of the posts. As suggested by Crang and Cook (2007), I have used both pre-defined coding (derived from the theory as described in chapter 2) and open coding (derived from the empirical material) to analyze the posts, to get an as comprehensible analysis as possible. The open coding was used to minimize the risk of missing important patterns. After the initial analysis of each post, I re-read each of them aiming to find new patterns and apply the new codes derived from the first read of the material. My analysis template can be found in Appendix 3.

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[2] The interview can be found in Appendix 1.
[3] This table can be found in Appendix 2.

4 Facebook use in the "Switch to Organic" campaign

4.1 Swedish Society for Nature Conservation

Naturskyddsföreningen or Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) is the largest environmental organization in Sweden with more than 224 000 members (Naturskyddsföreningen, n.d.). According to themselves, they are also the most influential ENGO in Sweden (ibid). They were founded more than 100 years ago and today they work with issues like climate change, protecting the ocean and forests, sustainable agriculture and environmental toxins (ibid). They do this by producing reports and books, campaigning, hosting debates and conferences, and working with the media (ibid).

   SSNC also uses social media to communicate with the public. They have a Facebook page with more than 151 000 followers; they have Twitter, Instagram and a YouTube channel. They also have several blogs, for example their president's blog, a climate blog and a forest blog. As we can see in Table 1, Facebook is their most followed social media account by far.

Table 1. Number of followers for SSNC's respective accounts on social media sites as of 2016-04-19.

Social media site	Number of followers/subscribers
Facebook	151 515
Twitter	17 900
Instagram	12 600
YouTube	1 301

4.2 The "Switch to Organic" campaign

The campaign "Byt till eko" which in English means "Switch to organic", was initiated by SSNC in May 2013 and was scheduled to go on until May 2016, says Switch to Organic campaign manager (interviewed in May 2015, for full interview see Appendix 1). According to her, the aim of the campaign was to increase sales of organic groceries to private consumers, but also to raise awareness about organic food production. They started off the campaign in September 2013 by launching a campaign website as well as printed material and a short video, where the concept of organic food production was explained in a simple and humorous way by a popular Swedish comedy duo. The video had been viewed by over 100 000 people by December 2013, according to the campaign manager. Just before the launch of the campaign, at the end of August, they also posted a Facebook post about the pros and cons of choosing organic versus non-organic sour cream which become very widely shared: over 62 000 people shared it. In terms of interest and attention the campaign can therefore be considered quite successful.

4.2.1 Campaign strategies

The campaign manager of the Switch to Organic campaign told me that both their many local volunteer groups and social media are important for SSNC in their campaigns. She goes on to talk about how they try to construct their communication in this campaign in the form of advice to consumers, and how they aim to be very clear about their message. Two of their important articles she mentions are "8 myths about organic food" and "5 important products to switch to organic", which were published on their website and read by many. She also mentions how they have been working with their language, trying to sound as informal and accessible as possible. They also came up with a new word, "o-ekologiskt" ("non-organic" in translation), which they introduced to the public quite successfully, says the campaign manager. The word was even used in a TV commercial by one of the major grocery store chains in Sweden, Coop.

   Part of the campaign strategy was also to put pressure on grocery stores, according to Switch to Organic campaign manager. Acknowledging that grocery stores can easily influence customers, e.g. by placing organic products in strategic places in the store, she also emphasizes that they have a much bigger budget for marketing than SSNC. For these reasons, she tells me, SSNC has encouraged grocery stores to advertise organic products better, increase their supply of organic products and to start organic campaigns of their own. Many grocery stores responded well: by the end of 2014 all the major chains were involved and some also ran campaigns of their own, says the campaign manager.

   While in the beginning of the campaign the focus was quite broad, in 2014 SSNC decided to limit the campaign to focus mostly on fruit, and especially on pesticide traces in fruit, says Switch to Organic campaign manager. In 2015 the focus was broadened again: the focus products of 2015 were coffee, bananas and grapes, meat, milk, potatoes, pineapples, apples, and bread, according to the campaign manager (email in April 2016).

   When it comes to framing the issue of organic food, SSNC consciously uses mostly *social-altruistic* and *biospheric* motives (see section 2.2 for definition) to connect to the public, such as the health of the farm workers growing the food or the health of children living near plantations; even if sometimes they use *egoistic* concerns, such as the effect on one's own health, as well, says Switch to Organic campaign manager. She says that they know concerns for one's own health is the most important motive for buying organic, but they focus on other motives since they do not think there is enough research on the effect that eating organic versus non-organic food have on your health and too many actors are talking about this already. The campaign manager did not give any further motivation for their framing choices.

4.2.2 Facebook posts

Facebook was an important arena for the Switch to Organic campaign and it was used a lot. There are 151 Facebook campaign posts (posts containing the campaign hashtag #byttilleko) as of March 2016, which means an average of about five posts per month – however, the posting frequency was sometimes uneven with three posts per day some days and more than two months between posts at one occasion (during the summer vacations). The top post has 83 000 likes, 62 000 shares, and 4 900 comments – its total amount of interactions (likes, shares and comments) are more than five times the total interactions of the second top post. This post was the second most shared Facebook post in Sweden during August 2013, according to SSNC. The median number of total interactions[4] for a post was 1 686, while the median for likes was 1 300, the median for shares was 234 and the median for comments[5] was 33. You can see the number of interaction for all the posts in Figure 1, 2 and 3 as well as in Appendix 2.

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[4] Facebook offers the possibility to pay for enhanced visibility of a post, making it reach more people – I do not know if SSNC has done this.
[5] Replies to a comment are not counted as comments by Facebook and thus not in this study, so the real number of comments is higher.

*One outlier post that had 83 000 likes, 62 000 shares and 4 900 comments have been left out.

Figure 1. Number of interactions for all Facebook campaign posts (except one outlier) in 2013.

*One outlier post that had 24 000 likes, 3 900 shares and 600 comments have been left out.
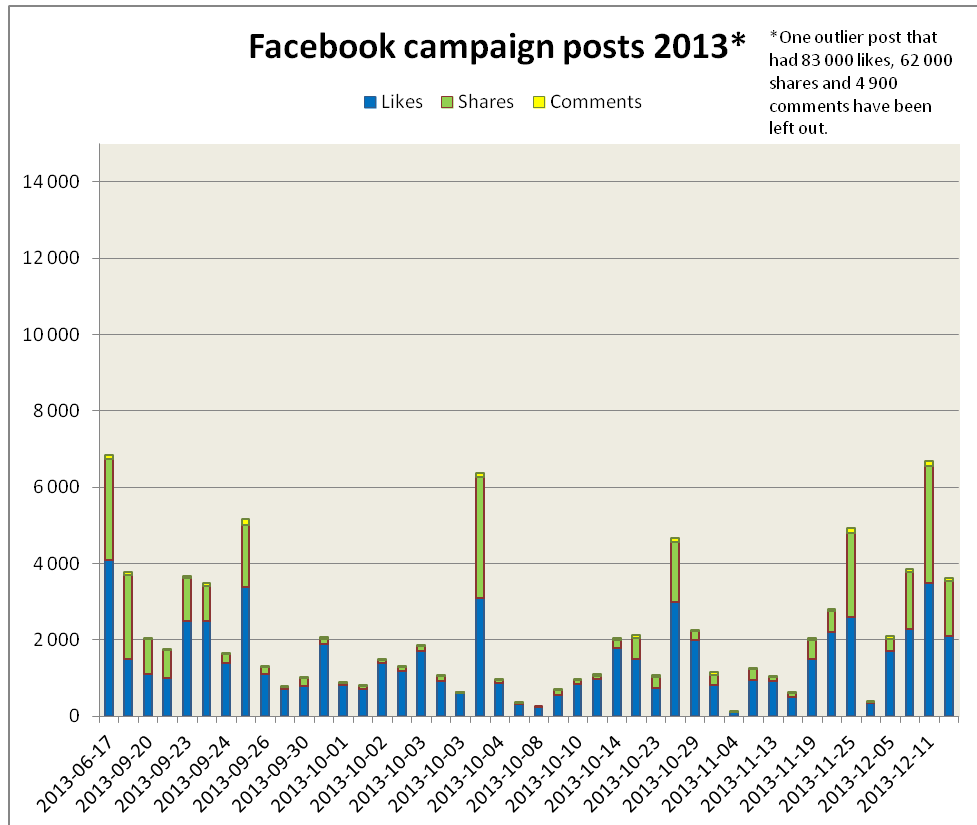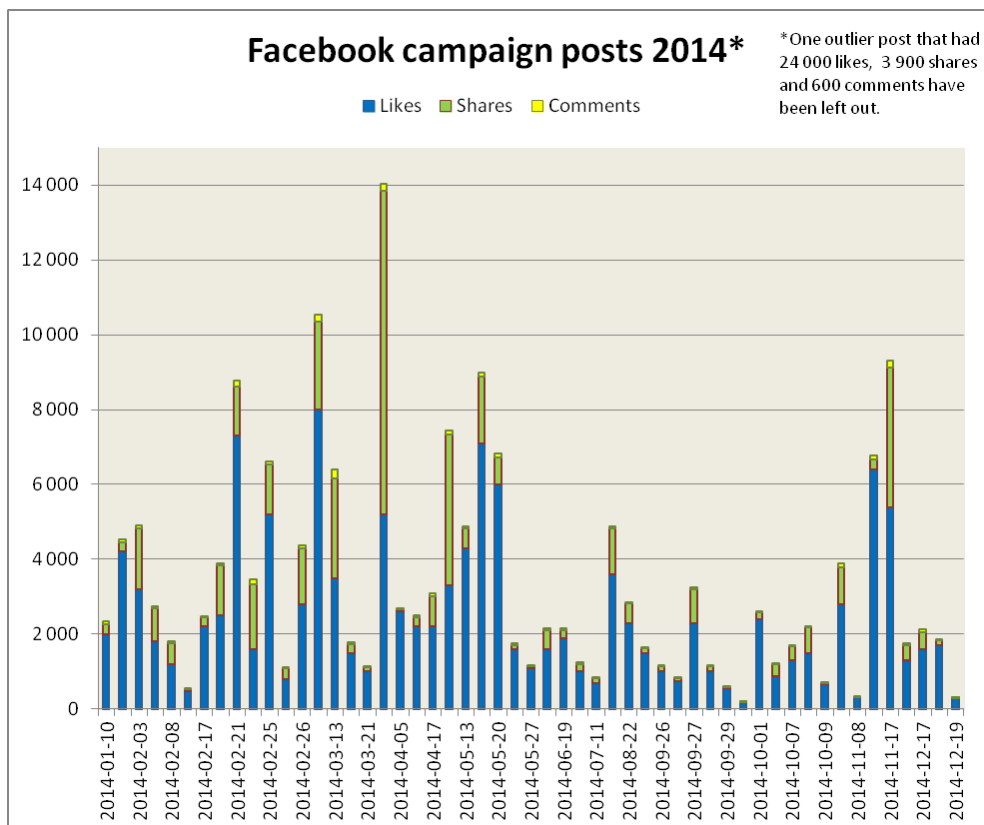
Figure 2. Number of interactions for all Facebook campaign posts (except one outlier) in 2014.
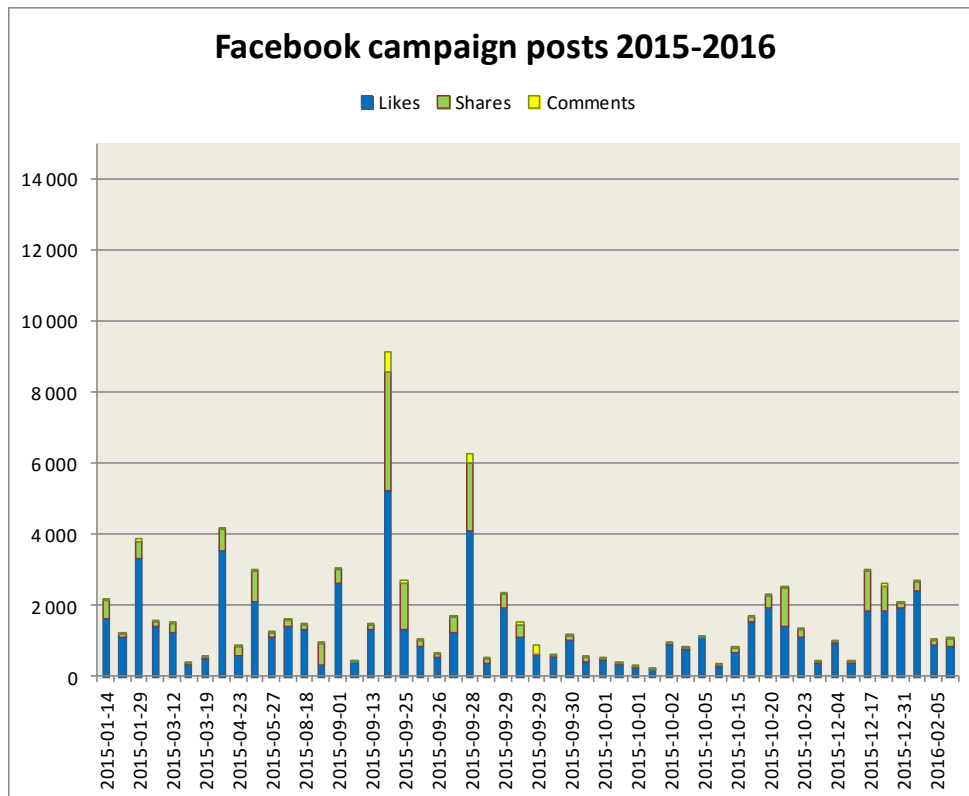
Figure 3. Number of interactions for all Facebook campaign posts in 2015 and 2016.

Out of the 15 analyzed posts, 10 were pictures (but some of those also included links), 4 were links and one was a video. The pictures included both photos and graphics, and the links were both to SSNC's own web pages and to external sites. The video was SSNC's campaign video mentioned in section 4.2. All except for one of the posts contained some element of the category *environmental information*; almost half of them could also be placed in the category of *green community* or *mobilizing*; while less than a third contained elements of *micro-volunteering*, see Table 2. For an explanation of the categories see section 2.1.

Table 2. Facebook post sorted into categories. Note that a post can be in multiple categories.

Facebook post categories (from Cox, 2007)	
Environmental information and buzz	14
Green community and social networking	6
Reporting and documenting	0
Public criticism and accountability	0
Mobilizing	6
Micro-volunteering and self-organizing	4

Almost all of the posts contained *contextual information* (see section 2.2) about the issue, and more than half included at least one element of *empowering rhetoric* (see section 2.2), such as e.g. "Come on Sweden – let's beat Denmark! For the planet's and our kids' sake. Join the challenge by buying twice as much organic as you usually do." (my translation). When it comes to framing, two thirds of the posts used *biospheric* concerns to frame the issue, almost two thirds used *social-altruistic* and less than half used *egoistic* concerns. (For a definition of the three types of concerns, please see section 2.2.) One single post could of course contain more than one frame – in fact two thirds of them described more than one type of concern. Almost half of the posts described either a positive or negative example of

organic versus non-organic production or consumption. For more data on framing and content, see Table 3.

Table 3. The content and framing of Facebook posts: number of posts that contained each of these elements.

Content and framing of Facebook posts		
Contextual information	about the issue	14
	about the campaign	6
Empowerment		8
Framing	Egoistic concerns	6
	Social-altruistic	9
	Biospheric	10
Thanking their supporters		2
Connecting to	earlier parts of the campaign	3
	a news story or major event	6
	the issue in another country	6
Example	Positive	7
	Negative	7
Advertising of company partner		1
Campaign effect		3
Referring to government and/or UN institutions' claims		2

Many of the posts were describing the effect (on the environment and on humans) of organic and non-organic production: both negative effects of non-organic production and positive effects of organic production. Out of the 11 posts that described these effects, 4 described only negative effects, 4 described mainly negative but also some positive effects, 2 had equal amounts of negative and positive effects and 1 described only positive effects.

The language in the posts was humoristic in almost half of the posts. Two thirds of the posts had informal language, most of them very informal.

All except for one post contained an explicit or implicit call to action. Almost two thirds called on the reader to buy organic products and about half encouraged them to find out more about the issue by clicking on a link. One of the posts enticed the reader to become a member of SSNC and the rest of the calls to action was about spreading the word, online (a fifth) or offline (a fifth), or engage in other offline activities. More than half of the posts offered multiple ways to engage. For all calls to action, see Table 4. None of the posts were explicitly inviting supporters to comment or interact with SSNC.

Table 4. The calls to action in all the Facebook posts.

Call to action in Facebook posts		
Call to action	None	1
	Explicit	12
	Implicit	3
Type of action	Buy organic	9
	Find out more	7
	Spread the word online	3
	Spread the word offline	3
	Engage in other offline activities	2
	Become a member of SSNC	1
Multiple ways to engage		8

4.2.3 Facebook comments

Almost all of the Facebook posts had some comments, ranging from 1 to almost 4 900, while the median was 33 comments. The comments were mainly positive towards SSNC and/or the issue of increasing the consumption of organic food. SSNC had replied to a lot of the comments, both the positive and the negative. One of the general themes in the comments for many of the posts was a discussion of the prices of organic food: many thought it should be cheaper or subsidized, some pointed out that not everyone can afford it and so should not be made to feel bad, while others argued that being able to afford organic is a question of priorities, etcetera.

   Another frequent type of comment was personal examples or advice to others, and critical/skeptical questions were also common. There were also passionate comments, with commenters upset about various actors who they blamed for the low organic consumption/supply; comments with encouragement to SSNC for doing this campaign; and some curious questions on issues regarding organic food.

   SSNC's replies mainly consisted of more facts on the issue, often by providing links to their own articles, and thanking or encouraging their supporters for buying organic or engaging in the issue in other ways. A common reply was also SSNC explaining their view on the discussed issue, often stating that they always base their opinions on facts; and in some replies they were offering advice on what to do, for example to talk to your local grocery store to get them to supply more organic.

   In summary, the communication of SSNC on Facebook (posts and comments) during the Switch to Organic campaign was informative, empowering and encouraging in many cases, used negative and positive examples, mainly framed the issue as a biospheric or social-altruistic concern (often describing the negative effects of non-organic production), and urged the reader to buy more organic and learn more about the issue.

4.3   Organic consumption in Sweden

The goal of the Switch to Organic campaign was to raise organic consumption. While it is impossible to draw any causal results from the campaign to consumption as people's consumption patterns are dependent on so many more factors, it is interesting to have a closer look at what happened with consumption during the time of the campaign, because it can give some indication – especially when looking at some of the focus products in the campaign.

   In 2015, organic consumption increased by 39% in Sweden (KRAV, 2016a). In Figure 4 we can see that organic consumption has increased faster since 2013: the increase in 2012 was 10%, in 2013 it was 13% and in 2014 it was 38%. In some categories of food, the organic sales increase was especially high. KRAV, Sweden's most well-known organic food certification (KRAV, 2015), reports that for example KRAV certified bread sales increased by 72% and coffee by 28% in 2015 (KRAV, 2016b).

   The 38% increase in Sweden in 2014 was unique in the world, according to Ekoweb[6] (2015). As a comparison, the increase of organic sales in USA, Germany and Denmark was between 8-10%, putting the percentage of organic food sales at between 4 and 8.5% of total sales (ibid). Norway had a 20% increase but from a lower level: the percentage of organic food sales is about 2% there compared to 5.6% in Sweden (ibid). Ekoweb (2015) also claims that it was the demand from the consumers that was the most important factor in the increase in Sweden.

   So, in summary organic consumption increased a lot during the campaign period, after having only increased slightly in the years before the campaign started, and at least in 2014 the high increase was unique to Sweden.

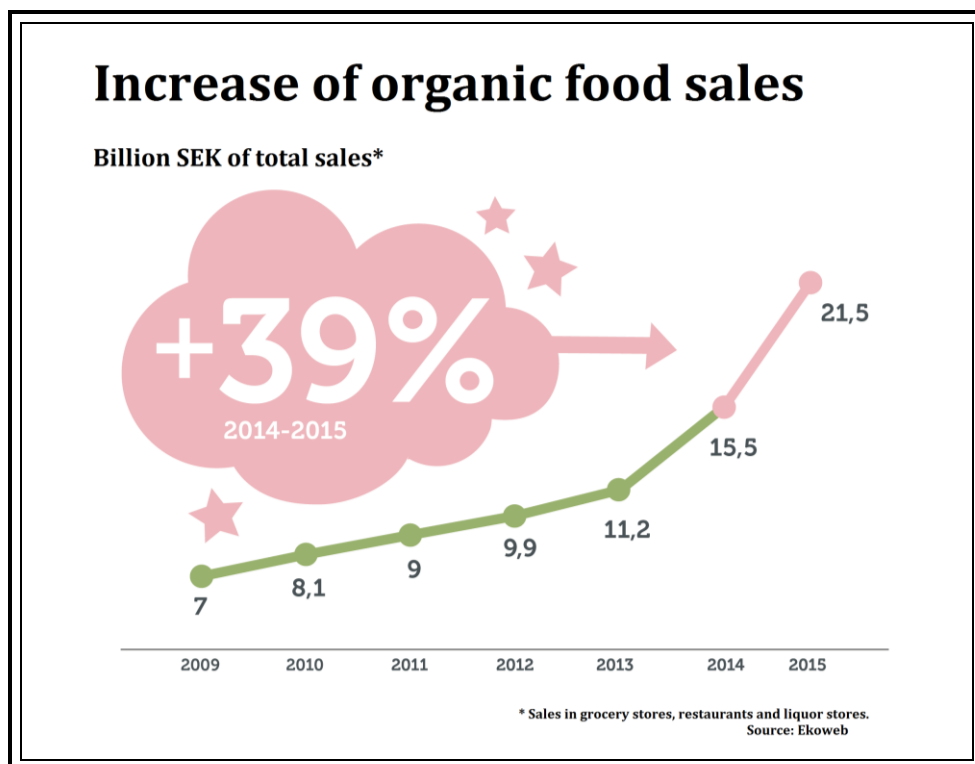[6] Ekoweb is an independent news site about the organic market.

Figure 4. The increase of organic consumption in Sweden during 2009-2015. Picture: KRAV 2016 (edited by author).

5   SSNC uses Facebook like a multi-tool

SSNC are using Facebook in multiple ways. Using Cox' (2013) six categories of social media functions, I found in this study that in the Switch to Organic campaign they used Facebook for at least four of these functions. *Environmental information* was the most frequent one, with SSNC providing information, facts and news stories about organic production and consumption and its consequences. They were also encouraging their followers to share this information on and otherwise creating a feeling of connectedness between the supporters, something that could be noted in the comments where people often gave advice and replies to others – so the second function, *green communities*, was also something SSNC used Facebook for.

There were no instances of *reporting and documenting* that were found in the analysis of this campaign, but being an SSNC supporter myself I know that they have used Facebook for this before, for example to encourage people to report sightings of hedgehogs, as SSNC were trying to get an assessment of the hedgehog's distribution in the country. When it comes to *public criticism and accountability*, I found nothing of that sort in the campaign either. However, SSNC's current cover photo on Facebook is a call to politicians to "live up to what we promised in Paris", referring to the global climate change agreement that was negotiated there in December 2015. I also found some Facebook pictures from another campaign where they are protesting the Swedish mining policy, calling it a crime and encouraging people to share the pictures.

SSCN use Facebook a lot to *mobilize* people as well, encouraging them to take part of the Switch to Organic campaign, both explicitly and implicitly, reporting on the victories and thanking their supporters for contributing. They also use it to advertise opportunities for *micro-volunteering*, for example suggesting people share SSNC's campaign Facebook posts, order and put up posters, talk to others about the issue or switch out one non-organic product to an organic. This gives people a chance to be part of the campaign while still being able to choose how much time and effort to put into it.

All the shares, likes and comments on the posts are an indicator of how many people felt connected to the campaign and contributed in some way. Since the median number of interactions for a post was 1 686, although a very small portion of this may have been negative comments[7], it shows that many people became engaged with the campaign.

5.1   Framing the issue as a challenge to create engagement

The campaign contained a lot of contextual information about the issue: 93% of the analyzed posts included some facts about organic consumption or production, there were a lot of links in the posts and comments to articles with more information, and many of SSNC's replies to comments included more facts as well. Information about an issue is usually the first step towards engaging in it. Since SSNC framed the facts to fit with their

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[7] The median number of comments was 33 and they were mainly positive, so it is safe to assume that only a very small portion of the total interaction could have been negative.

campaign the chances increases that a follower, who does not know a lot about the issue already, will trust SSNC as an authority and adopt a similar frame. In the best case this leads to them becoming engaged as well. As Sears et al (1985, p 142) argued, "our evaluations influence our beliefs" – meaning that if we already perceive an actor as trustworthy and knowledgeable (which most of SSNC's followers presumably do) we are likely to believe what this actor tells us. Sears et al were describing the criticized concept of attitude, but I propose that some of their theories can be applied on frames as well.

More than half of the posts included some sort of empowerment, for example: "Come on Sweden – let's beat Denmark! For the planet's and our kids' sake. Join the challenge by buying twice as much organic as you usually do." Other examples included telling supporters about the increase in organic sales and thanking them by counting up all the different ways they have engaged with the campaign, giving the reader a feeling of being part of the success no matter how small an action they had taken; and describing the positive effect (on the environment and humans) of choosing organic instead of non-organic. This has arguably contributed to followers feeling connected to the campaign and supporting it by for example sharing posts.

Facebook provided a good mobilizing structure where it was very easy for supporters to do something small, by for example sharing campaign content directly with their friends on Facebook. A fifth of the posts called for the reader to share campaign information online, and even the posts without a call to action to share were shared by many – the median number of shares for a post was 234 while the record was over 62 000 shares. For that record post it means that it was shared by over 40% of the people who follow SSNC on Facebook – although this is not entirely correct, since it was probably shared by some non-followers as well and some people may have shared it more than once.

SSNC used multiple frames for many of their posts. In two thirds of the posts the issue of organic consumption and production was framed as a biospheric concern, with non-organic production threatening nature, including various animals, like bees, birds, fish, and nature types like the ocean and rain forest. Almost two thirds of the posts were framed with social-altruistic values, such as concerns for farm workers who are exposed to strong pesticides, or children who ingests food with pesticide traces. A little over a third of the posts included egoistic frames, for example the health risk of eating fruit and other food with pesticide traces. An explanation for SSNC's focus on biospheric concerns can perhaps be found in the overall aim of the organization, as they are a nature conservation organization aiming to protect nature and the environment – a message on the front page on their website says "Become a member of SSNC and support the fight for nature and the environment" (my translation) (Naturskyddsföreningen, n.d.).

The fact that SSNC in most cases uses multiple frames is positive in the aspect that it increases the chance to attract more people, since people may have different frames and value different aspects to varying degrees. Many posts described effects and consequences of either non-organic farming (negative effects) or organic farming (positive effects). The large majority either described only negative effects (one third of the posts), or mainly negative effects but also some positive ones (one third of the posts). To focus on the negative could be effective, but there is a risk that a framing that is too apocalyptic will make the reader unable to take it in and instead ignore the issue, unless the post includes suggestions for action that can be taken by the reader to prevent the negative scenario that is described (Brulle, 2010); something that SSNC did in most cases. A similarity between the Switch to Organic campaign and the Greenpeace Unfriend Coal campaign is that they can both be classified as a "challenge campaign" (Brulle, 2010, p 92), which is when one provide the reader with actions that can have a positive impact on the issue, so that they might see it as a positive challenge – a way for them to contribute towards a better world (Brulle, 2010). Greenpeace did this by pointing out flaws in Facebook's energy policy and how they could be corrected, while SSNC in most posts emphasized that the solution is to switch to organic – in the best case scenario making the reader feel that they can actually

make a difference, especially since SSNC reported on the success with increased organic sales.

The name of the campaign ("Switch to Organic" in my translation from the original "Byt till eko") is in itself a call to action – a request to "switch to organic". In addition to this, almost two thirds of the posts contained a call to buy organic and about half a call to find out more by clicking a link – these were the two most common calls to action. This is consistent with the goals of the campaign, which was to increase organic sales and increase understanding of the issue.

5.2   Interactions and individualized action

None of the posts explicitly invited the reader to comment or interact with SSNC in another way, except for the one that encouraged them to become a member. Despite this, most of the posts had at least a few comments: the median was 33 comments for a post. This shows that people were at least somewhat engaged in the issue, caring enough about it to speak their mind. And like the study by Gerodimos and Justinussen (2015) of Obama's Facebook election campaign showed, Facebook can be a useful medium to gain new supporters even without much two-way interaction. Also, online action network Avaaz has chosen not to facilitate a *green community* of collaboration between its members, as it would take too much effort. SSNC has chosen a similar but yet different approach in that they use the dominating social network already in place, Facebook, to facilitate a green discussion about topics they find important.

An employee at SSNC who works with digital communication says that they do recruit members using Facebook (email interview in April 2016). However, only one of the analyzed posts included an explicit suggestion to become a member. Perhaps SSNC has noticed the same phenomenon as Bennett and Segerberg (2012), that many (especially younger) people are not as keen on being members of organizations anymore, but instead want opportunities for individualized action with the freedom to choose which issues to engage in. Can this be a reason why SSNC do not push their Facebook followers more to join them as a member? Or perhaps they assume that most people who follow them on Facebook are already members, since in fact their number of members is almost 50% higher than their number of followers: 224 00 members versus 152 000 followers. My data is inconclusive about this.

Two studies by Bennett and Segerberg (2011, 2012) indicate that in an individualized modern world, NGOs need to offer more tailored engagement options to their supporters in order to successfully mobilize people. In other words, there should be multiple ways to engage in an issue so that as many as possible can find an action that fit with their lifestyle choices and level of engagement. More than half of SSNC's posts offered multiple ways to engage with the issue, most commonly to buy something organic, read more about the issue, or spread the word online or offline. Not all posts were suggesting multiple different actions but overall the campaign was relatively diversified in its action repertoire, even if it was mostly focused on encouraging people to buy more organic.

The Greenpeace Unfriend Coal campaign from 2011 described in section 2.4 is interesting to compare to the Switch to Organic campaign by SSNC, especially since the former campaign proved successful. Although the goals of the two campaigns were a little different (getting Facebook to stop using coal power versus increasing organic sales), they both concerned global environmental issues. The types of content in the Greenpeace Unfriend Coal campaign were rather similar to that of SSNC's Switch to Organic campaign: they both contained a lot of contextual information, about half of the posts in both campaigns had a call to action, and both SSNC and Greenpeace reported on the campaign progress multiple times.

The number of page likes for the two campaigns was not far apart: 185 000 for the Greenpeace campaign and 152 000 for the SSNC campaign, and the median number of

comments per post per follower was very close. The median number of likes per post per follower was quite different though: it was four times higher for the SSNC campaign. This could mean that the Switch to Organic campaign was more engaging. A reason for this might be that SSNC put a lot of effort into using an accessible, conversational language in their posts, (although I do not know what kind of language Greenpeace used). It could also be that people felt more empowered by SSNC's campaign, since it was aimed right at them, giving them an opportunity to have a direct impact themselves by buying something organic, while the Greenpeace campaign was about putting pressure on another actor (Facebook), a more indirect action. There are other possible explanations that might have had an impact on this difference as well: changes in Facebook's news feed algorithms – today posts that you like will show up in your friends' news feeds but this might not have been the case in 2011 during the Greenpeace campaign; perhaps people spend more time on Facebook now than 2011; Facebook offers the ability to pay for enhanced visibility of a post, and I do not know if SSNC or Greenpeace have used this option for any of their posts.

5.3 Primary and secondary audiences – consumers and grocery stores

Cox' (2013) classic strategy of mobilizing a secondary audience (usually the public) to influence the primary audience (the decision makers), remains important in campaign work. In the Switch to Organic campaign, I have not found much that point towards SSNC trying to influence politicians as decision makers: perhaps they instead saw the grocery stores as the primary audience, as they have the power to increase the number of organic products they offer. Consumers would then be the secondary audience, since they can put pressure on grocery stores to supply more organic products. Both were targeted by SSNC in the Switch to Organic campaign. However, one could argue that the consumers are both the primary and the secondary audience, and that so are the grocery stores. They both have the power to realize the goal of the campaign: grocery stores by supplying more organic and consumers by buying more organic; as well as the power to put pressure on each other to act according with the goal: grocery stores by promoting organic, lowering the prices etcetera, and consumers by demanding a better selection of organic food and request that their grocery store supply more organic. (Essentially it all comes down to the question of who has the power in a market economy, the consumers or the producers/vendors.) The grocery stores and the consumers were also both targeted directly by SSNC: according to the campaign manager they had a continuous dialogue with the grocery stores to get them onboard and work towards increasing organic sales; and the Facebook campaign were mainly aimed at consumers.

The fact that grocery stores ran campaigns of their own to promote organic most likely had a big impact on organic sales. In the interview with the Switch to Organic campaign manager she points out that grocery stores have the strongest instruments to influence the consumers. However, she still maintains that SSNC started the movement to increase organic, and the grocery stores and other actors then tagged along. Regardless of whom to praise, the results have been very good, with organic sales increasing by 38% and 39% in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Looking at specific products, the campaign manager tells me that organic fruit sales increased a lot during 2014 when the campaign's main focus was fruit, so it seems feasible that they had an impact here. Coffee and bread were two of the focus products for the campaign in 2015 and organic certification label KRAV reports that those two products were among the organic products that increased the most in 2015, with organic KRAV labeled bread sales increasing by 72% and coffee by 28%. Another indication that the campaign had an impact is the fact that the increase of organic consumption in 2014 was uniquely high in Sweden compared to the rest of the world, with about 4 times higher increase than e.g. Denmark, Germany and USA.

6   Conclusion

Despite the efforts of some scholars to diminish online activism, many have defended it instead and conducted studies that show how effective it can be (e.g. Breuer & Farooq, 2012; Breindl, 2013; Jones, 2015). We do live in a more digitalized world and with the upswing of social media that we have seen in the last few years, there is a new world of online engagement and activism. Avaaz, one of the biggest online action organizations, was founded in this new arena. One of the most important strengths of Avaaz it their ability to reach out to their supporters quickly when an urgent issue emerges or something changes that requires immediate action (Kavada, 2012). Being an Avaaz supporter myself, I often get emails which say something like "we only have 48 hours to act on this issue". Without internet, Avaaz would not exist – it is thanks to email and social media that they are able to get their huge amount of support so quickly.

It is easy to be an online activist when all you have to do is sign a petition, something that both Avaaz and Greenpeace seem to have taken to mind. In the Greenpeace campaign described in section 2.4, there were no calls to action that encouraged the supporters to take part in any offline activities. It seems like both Greenpeace (at least in said campaign) and Avaaz mainly mobilize their supporters for fast and easy online actions, like sharing a post or sign a petition. SSNC on the other hand has managed to create engagement online that might have lead to actions offline with more people buying organic (organic sales have increased a lot but it is difficult to assess how much of it that has to do with the Switch to Organic campaign).

Since many people spend a lot of time on Facebook (on average a Swede who uses social media spends almost one hour per day on social media sites, with Facebook as the dominating one), it seems like a great place to inform and mobilize people for a campaign. It also has many weak ties, making it a great mobilizing structure, since the opportunity to reach a big crowd increases with the weak ties who can act as bridges between groups and spread ideas quickly with one of Facebook's main functions – the share button. However, we have to take into account that the flow of information on Facebook can be very high depending on the number of friends one has and pages one follows – it is easy to get lost in the crowd – so it is important to have a good strategy.

SSNC are using Facebook in many ways, harnessing all of the six functions of social media that Cox (2013) describes as relevant for environmental communication: environmental information, green communities, reporting and documenting, public criticism, mobilizing, and micro-volunteering. They are informing, engaging, empowering and offering multiple ways to act on the issue at hand. In the Switch to Organic campaign, they framed the issue mainly as a threat, describing the negative impacts of non-organic production, and provided simple actions for the individual to be able to have a positive influence and turn the threat around. This is what Brulle (2010) would term a challenge campaign and it can be quite effective.

It is difficult to assess how much SSNC's campaign had to do with the fact that organic consumption in Sweden has increased so much in the last few years (which was not my aim in this study anyway). Organic consumption has risen by almost 40% each year in both

2014 and 2015 and the huge increase at least in 2014 was unique to Sweden, with much lower numbers in other comparable countries. Perhaps SSNC's campaign started a chain reaction? Their own view is that even though the actions of the grocery stores had a big impact, SSNC started the trend with their campaign and by putting pressure on the grocery stores.

6.1   Limitations

The limited time frame for this study made it impossible to analyze more than 10% of the Facebook campaign posts. I have not been able to inquire all the information I would have liked from SSNC's employees, since their workload has prevented them from participating in interviews this spring.

Local volunteer groups within SSNC might have used Facebook on their own in this campaign in different ways, but that is out of scope for this study: I have only looked at SSNC's official, national Facebook page. Furthermore, this study is not able to say anything about public engagement outside of how people depict their engagement on Facebook. Also, Facebook offers the ability to pay for enhanced visibility of a post, which can have an impact on the number of interactions a post generates: I do not know if SSNC has used this option for any of their posts.

I also recognize that being an activist myself, I am in no way impartial and my own experiences have most likely influenced my analysis. Of course my first-hand experience can also be an advantage.

6.2   Further research

The impact that NGOs' Facebook use has on public engagement is a related topic that would be very interesting to study. To do this, more thorough studies are needed: interviews with NGO personnel and supporters would be necessary. It would also be interesting to interview people who have been (active) members of an NGO for a longer time, to investigate if they perceive any differences in how the NGO engages people since the upswing of social media.

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Appendix 1: Interview with SSNC

Telephone interview with Jessica Andréason 2015-05-05

Jessica is the project leader for the "Switch to Organic" campaign at Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC).

Interviewee's background: Jessica has a bachelor in media and communication. She has worked as a communicator and project manager at SSNC for ten years.

Background of the campaign: Since 1990, SSNC has an annual event called the Environmentally Friendly Week ("Miljövänliga veckan") which is about changing consumer behavior. It is very big all over Sweden, with both the national SSNC and local groups organizing different activities. It usually has a theme and last year (2014) it was Switch to organic ("Byt till eko").

Goals and motives: The Switch to Organic campaign ("Byt till eko") started in May 2013 and goes on for another year. The aim is to increase sales of organic food to private consumers and also to increase awareness and understanding of what organic food production means. They started the campaign because organic food sales were really low, at 3%, and not increasing. They had also noticed that earlier campaigns they had had, for example one about lowering your meat consumption for the climate, had had an actual effect on consumer behavior. They have no concrete goals for the campaign but their target for 2015 is to keep the increase at about 30%.

Knowledge sources: Their strategies are mostly based on experience but they are also grounded in science. They try to be as clear in their message as possible and offer advice to consumers about what to do. They have a broad base of knowledge in the organization, for example communicators, experts on agriculture, journalists.

Campaign start: In the fall of 2013 SSNC launched a film clip with a popular Swedish comedy duo (Anders och Måns) that explained the organic food issue in a simple way. It was viewed by 100 000 people between September and December 2013. At the same time they also launched a campaign website and printed material. They had two important articles published on their website: "8 myths about organic food" and "5 important products to switch to organic", which were widely shared and spread. In 2014 they narrowed the campaign and focused on fruit and specifically on traces of pesticides in fruit.

Challenge to beat Denmark: In 2013 part of the campaign message was "Come on Sweden, let's beat the Danish!" Organic food sales in Denmark were then twice as high as in Sweden. They also had a seminar about what Denmark had done differently than Sweden when it comes to organic food.

Local groups and social media: Social media is an important platform for SSNC but so are their many local groups. During "Environmentally Friendly Week" many of the local groups, thousands of members in total, were out campaigning.

Putting pressure on grocery stores: SSNC has tried to push grocery stores to take their part in increasing organic, asking them to supply more organic products, advertise them better, give them priority spaces in the stores and so on. They have a continuous dialogue with them but would not go as far as to call it cooperation, they have not been sponsored. SSNC has encouraged the stores to use their campaign material or to create their own campaigns, which many of them have. Coop was first (2013). They are a cooperative business and have their own consumer associations, who were quite active and used SSNC's campaign materials. In 2014 all the major grocery store chains became involved. Jessica emphasizes that while SSNC can inform people, it is the grocery stores that have the best tools to influence the customers; they have a much bigger budget and do a different kind of marketing, and they have the ability to for example put organic products in a highly visible part of the store.

Working with language: SSNC worked a lot with their language, trying to sound accessible and informal/colloquial/conversational, and they also quite successfully introduced a new word: "non-organic" ("oekologiskt"). They felt this was important, because otherwise when talking about organic food the opposite was conventional food, and this made it sound as if conventional/non-organic was the norm. Coop, one of Sweden's biggest grocery store chains, used this in a commercial. Another word they tried to introduce was "chemical farming" (kemikaliejordbruk) which was not as widely spread and more for people who were already knowledgeable.

Motives: SSNC mostly uses social-altruistic and environmental concerns as motives, but a little bit of egoistic concerns as well – they use concerns about health, the environment and the workers growing the food. With health, they mostly focus on the health of the farm workers but also on children and pregnant women and a little bit of one's own health. They say they know that one's own health is the biggest driver for buying organic, but that there are already so many others talking about this issue. They also feel that there is not that much research about how big a difference organic food will have on your health.

Important in campaign work: To limit the campaign. For example, in this campaign SSNC focus only on private consumers, not businesses or the public sector. It is also important to have a clear message and be persistent. They are trying to get a movement starting.

Cooperation: SSNC have made the campaign global by working together with 40 like-minded organizations in about 30 countries all over the world.

Results and evaluations: In the second half of 2013, organic food sales increased by 13% in Sweden. In 2014, they increased 38% and organic wine sales increased by 100%. To evaluate if it was their campaign that made the difference, they look at specific products that they have focused on in their campaigns to see how much they increased compared to others. In 2013 and 2014 both fruit and dairy sales have increased a lot, and meat increased partly. Coffee increased a little and potatoes not at all. Their main focus on 2014 was on fruit so it seems they succeeded. When it comes to bananas, the company Testfakta which performs laboratory tests on products, got a lot of attention in August 2013 when they published a test of bananas which showed there are traces of pesticide in the bananas, not just in the peel – so this probably also contributed to the increase of organic banana sales. SSNC did not talk about wine but they did talk a lot about grapes so they think that had a lot to do with the big increase in organic wine sales. The grocery stores also have a big part in the increase of organic food sales but SSNC started it all. They also evaluate their visibility in social and classic media, including their own website. They published two articles about organic food there that became very widely spread, one of them even made their website crash because of the pressure, so they had to upgrade their servers. A third way of evaluation is to count how many folders and posters that have been ordered from the national office to local groups, they evaluate different parts of Sweden. They also supply material to teachers who report back about how the students perceived the material.

Future goals: This year the campaign will focus on coffee, which has had a small increase. They will also focus on bread, which is something that many consumers request as there is very little organic bread for sale. They will have organic "fika" (coffee break/tea time) as a main activity and also try to promote organic snack food at schools.

More distant goals are that the public sector consumption should be 80% organic by 2030, and also that 25% of the crop fields in Sweden should be organic by 2018, and 50% by 2030.

Appendix 2: Complete table of Facebook posts for the Switch to Organic campaign

All posts by SSNC that contain the campaign hashtag #byttilleko (the statistics were taken between 2016-03-21 and 2016-03-28 and might have changed since then).

Please note:

1. Facebook offers the possibility to pay for enhanced visibility of a post, making it reach more people – I do not know if SSNC has done this.
2. When the number of likes is higher than 1000 it is rounded to the nearest 100 by Facebook, and thus here as well.
3. Replies to a comment are not counted as comments by Facebook and thus not here, so the real number of comments is higher.

Date	Likes	Shares	Comments	Total number of interactions
2013-06-17	4100	2645	109	6854
2013-08-29	83000	62044	4875	149919
2013-09-18	1500	2197	96	3793
2013-09-20	1100	917	28	2045
2013-09-20	1000	749	24	1773
2013-09-23	2500	1126	62	3688
2013-09-24	2500	919	63	3482
2013-09-24	1400	234	23	1657
2013-09-25	3400	1616	152	5168
2013-09-26	1100	180	25	1305
2013-09-26	704	68	27	799
2013-09-30	804	203	11	1018
2013-10-01	1900	137	34	2071
2013-10-01	819	57	31	907
2013-10-01	708	76	4	788
2013-10-02	1400	87	27	1514
2013-10-02	1200	91	25	1316
2013-10-03	1700	131	24	1855
2013-10-03	924	128	21	1073
2013-10-03	603	20	11	634
2013-10-04	3100	3183	100	6383
2013-10-04	864	88	14	966
2013-10-08	328	18	34	380
2013-10-08	234	12	0	246
2013-10-09	570	109	30	709
2013-10-10	854	98	14	966
2013-10-11	976	92	37	1105
2013-10-14	1800	204	39	2043
2013-10-22	1500	556	65	2121
2013-10-23	741	301	40	1082

Date	Likes	Shares	Comments	Total number of interactions
2013-10-24	3000	1574	99	4673
2013-10-29	2000	223	43	2266
2013-11-04	825	265	65	1155
2013-11-04	112	0	2	114
2013-11-07	962	275	27	1264
2013-11-13	923	111	12	1046
2013-11-13	519	82	19	620
2013-11-19	1500	499	50	2049
2013-11-22	2200	563	55	2818
2013-11-25	2600	2197	126	4923
2013-11-27	340	30	2	372
2013-12-05	1700	325	88	2113
2013-12-09	2300	1482	67	3849
2013-12-11	3500	3065	137	6702
2013-12-19	2100	1435	91	3626
2014-01-10	2000	265	90	2355
2014-01-14	4200	252	78	4530
2014-02-03	3200	1617	92	4909
2014-02-05	1800	896	49	2745
2014-02-08	1200	570	37	1807
2014-02-13	24000	3851	557	28408
2014-02-13	483	51	13	547
2014-02-17	2200	255	33	2488
2014-02-19	2500	1343	63	3906
2014-02-21	7300	1322	144	8766
2014-02-24	1600	1740	132	3472
2014-02-25	5200	1326	102	6628
2014-02-25	787	292	32	1111
2014-02-26	2800	1495	75	4370
2014-03-03	8000	2358	183	10541
2014-03-13	3500	2665	226	6391
2014-03-14	1500	235	46	1781
2014-03-21	1000	106	18	1124
2014-03-24	5200	8645	201	14046
2014-04-05	2600	56	24	2680
2014-04-16	2200	250	49	2499
2014-04-17	2200	814	68	3082
2014-04-28	3300	4046	93	7439
2014-05-13	4300	536	55	4891
2014-05-20	7100	1793	87	8980
2014-05-20	6000	733	109	6842
2014-05-23	1600	106	39	1745
2014-05-27	1100	39	17	1156
2014-06-13	1600	500	64	2164

Date	Likes	Shares	Comments	Total number of interactions
2014-06-19	1900	216	30	2146
2014-07-02	1000	209	39	1248
2014-07-11	676	150	27	853
2014-07-29	3600	1228	50	4878
2014-08-22	2300	526	29	2855
2014-09-26	1500	121	10	1631
2014-09-26	1000	148	16	1164
2014-09-26	730	87	34	851
2014-09-27	2300	904	59	3263
2014-09-28	1000	140	13	1153
2014-09-29	556	35	18	609
2014-09-30	172	1	4	177
2014-10-01	2400	190	31	2621
2014-10-02	868	339	14	1221
2014-10-07	1300	364	22	1686
2014-10-09	1500	689	25	2214
2014-10-09	657	35	7	699
2014-10-17	2800	990	95	3885
2014-11-08	307	0	27	334
2014-11-10	6400	275	91	6766
2014-11-17	5400	3735	178	9313
2014-11-27	1300	409	36	1745
2014-12-17	1600	448	90	2138
2014-12-18	1700	132	21	1853
2014-12-19	291	3	1	295
2015-01-14	1600	522	37	2159
2015-01-19	1100	71	33	1204
2015-01-29	3300	495	53	3848
2015-03-03	1400	120	19	1539
2015-03-12	1200	286	42	1528
2015-03-13	312	17	5	334
2015-03-19	490	46	6	542
2015-03-31	3500	611	59	4170
2015-04-23	563	244	37	844
2015-05-05	2100	845	52	2997
2015-05-27	1100	92	25	1217
2015-05-29	1400	169	52	1621
2015-08-18	1300	143	24	1467
2015-08-26	284	644	11	939
2015-09-01	2600	374	22	2996
2015-09-09	407	0	3	410
2015-09-13	1300	121	26	1447
2015-09-25	5200	3348	580	9128
2015-09-25	1300	1290	88	2678

Date	Likes	Shares	Comments	Total number of interactions
2015-09-26	824	183	17	1024
2015-09-26	528	79	2	609
2015-09-27	1200	457	49	1706
2015-09-28	4100	1898	240	6238
2015-09-28	357	137	13	507
2015-09-29	1900	413	35	2348
2015-09-29	1100	340	78	1518
2015-09-29	573	46	233	852
2015-09-29	529	26	12	567
2015-09-30	981	146	27	1154
2015-09-30	381	134	30	545
2015-10-01	452	42	24	518
2015-10-01	285	55	6	346
2015-10-01	211	31	2	244
2015-10-01	183	3	2	188
2015-10-02	880	49	12	941
2015-10-04	737	56	9	802
2015-10-05	1100	0	8	1108
2015-10-09	267	25	3	295
2015-10-15	640	156	10	806
2015-10-16	1500	139	45	1684
2015-10-20	1900	338	39	2277
2015-10-22	1400	1071	53	2524
2015-10-23	1100	199	7	1306
2015-11-11	364	12	3	379
2015-12-04	914	41	18	973
2015-12-10	347	48	4	399
2015-12-17	1800	1133	70	3003
2015-12-22	1800	725	70	2595
2015-12-31	1900	139	16	2055
2016-01-28	2400	249	36	2685
2016-02-05	870	123	21	1014
2016-03-22	813	229	29	1071

Appendix 3: Facebook post analysis template

Look at the post itself and the most popular comments, plus SSNC's reply to them.

Text and description of the post and comments

- Date:
- Type of post (link, picture, text):
- Likes:
- Shares:
- Comments:
- Other notes:

Pre-defined coding

- Call(s) to action:
    - Explicit or implicit?
    - What action?
    - Multiple ways to engage?
- Does it fit into a category of:
    - Environmental info
    - Green community
    - Reporting
    - Public criticism
    - Mobilizing
    - Micro-volunteering
- Does it include:
    - Contextual information
        - About the issue
        - About the campaign
    - Empowerment
- Framing:
    - Egoistic concerns
    - Social-altruistic
    - Biospheric
- Is it relating to a news story or major event?

Open coding suggestions

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Comments and SSNC's response