

Suffering, Compassion and the Telethon: from Producers to the Audience.

A multimethodological study of the Catalan telethon *La Marató de TV3*



Marta Domènech Baldó

Student number 350972

mdomenechbaldo@hotmail.com

Master Media, Culture and Society

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Supervisor: Dr. Stijn Joye

Second reader: Dr. Jacob Groshek

ABSTRACT

An explorative study is conducted on *La Marató de TV3*, as it is the most popular telethon in Catalonia and is responsible for the most fundraising in all of Spain. The most recent edition, in December 2010, raised € 8,735,103, the highest amount raised in the telethon's history. This study focuses on the two aspects that are key in explaining the success of this Catalan telethon: the production and the audience. The production of the telethon with references to the content and the audience reactions and involvement (participation and donation) are studied to find out what specific elements enable the telethon's success. *La Marató de TV3* is not yet analyzed in this way by other researchers.

Two datasets have been collected. The first dataset comprises of opinions expressed by three experts of *La Marató de TV3* and one philosopher specialized in compassion. Compassion is one of the main emotions that audiences can feel while watching a telethon or images of suffering. The data obtained from these four experts were collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews. The second dataset comprises of an online survey distributed to a sample of the audience of the Catalan telethon ($N=500$). This survey was conducted to study (1) the different motivations to participate or donate in that telethon, (2) the feelings that the audience has while watching images of suffering on the telethon, and (3) the main reasons why *La Marató de TV3* achieves such a success every year.

In our review of the literature, we defined a variety of aspects related to suffering media content, audiences, compassion, and telethons. The results of this research suggest that *La Marató de TV3* achieves a great popularity, participation, and donations mostly from the Catalan audience not due to the harsh images of suffering but due to different reasons such as the transparency of the project, the consolidated television program, the audience's confidence and belief in the project, the proximity from the channel TV3 and from the testimonials, the diverse representation of cases, and an overall Catalan community feeling.

Keywords: Telethon, Audience, Images of Suffering, Compassion, Audience's Participation, Audience's Reactions, Compassion Fatigue, Community Feelings.

PREFACE

The thesis you are about to read is a Master Thesis for the Master Media and Journalism, specialization in Media, Culture and Society at Erasmus University of Rotterdam. This thesis represents the end of my student life and it is written in two different countries, in the Netherlands and in Spain, over the past nine months. I am enthusiastic to finish off my student life with this thesis and start the next phase of my life in the workplace.

Writing this Master thesis was one of the most effectuated and accomplished task I have done during my study period. To conduct my own research on a subject I am interested was gratifying and enjoyable. This subject was connected to my home country, what makes this thesis a special project for me. However, I would not have been able to reach a satisfactory thesis development without the support and help I have had during this process, and therefore I would like to use this opportunity to express my thanks to each of them since without them this research study would be not possible.

Firstly, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Stijn Joye, who has supported me throughout. I appreciate his fast responses of my emails, his advice, and his feedback concerning my thesis. He helped me to resolve a problem with the program I used to conduct the online survey, which gave me the opportunity to obtain as many responses as possible without limitation. Also, I would especially like to thank him for his guidance through the statistical analyses with SPSS.

Secondly, TV3 was the institution that made this research possible. I admire their support for my Master thesis, guiding me with some suggestions and organizing three of my expert interviews, as well as some additional information that they supplied me with such as the number of calls of each hour of the 16-hour program and the script of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*.

Also I want to thank the four experts I have interviewed in April 2011, Xavier Abad, Carme Basté, Carles Checa, and Joan-Carles Mèlich. They dedicated their time to my thesis despite their busy schedules, something I sincerely appreciate. The interviews were interesting and I felt really comfortable interacting with all of them. I have learned a great deal of new information, aspects, and ideas not only to write my Master thesis but also to increase my knowledge on media and philosophy in general.

I will never forget the participation of the people who answered my online survey. It was pleasantly surprising how many interesting responses and quality comments people made while taking my survey. Thank to all of you; you are the society from Catalonia, the possible audience of *La Marató de TV3* and the most interesting aspect to investigate in my Master thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my friends, and Paul. My family always supported and encouraged me to write this thesis to the best of my ability. They have helped me anytime I needed them and they are always willing to offer important advice when I ask for it. Thank you to all my friends that asked regularly how my Master thesis was going. And finally, thanks to Paul, as he has lived with me throughout the process of writing this Master thesis, and has celebrated moments of satisfaction as well as worked through the stressful moments with me.

To conclude, I declare that the text and work presented in this Master thesis about *La Marató de TV3* is original and that no sources other than those mentioned in the text have been used in creating the thesis.

Marta Domènech Baldó

The Netherlands, August 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Preface	3
1) Introduction	8
2) Theoretical Framework	11
2.1 Compassion	11
2.1.1 Empathy, sympathy, pity and compassion	11
2.1.2 Compassion: the pursuit of another's well-being	13
2.1.3 The moral foundation of social justice	15
2.2 Mediated Compassion and Suffering	16
2.2.1 The mass media in a social context	16
2.2.2 The mediated representation: Guiding audience's actions	17
2.2.3 Compassion in a mediated context	18
2.2.3.1 The other's representation	19
2.2.3.2 The proper distance	20
2.2.3.3 Ideal victims: Children suffering	21
2.2.3.4 The 'ordinary' witnessing and the community sense	22
2.2.4 Global compassion: Social solidarity	23
2.3 Audiences	24
2.3.1 Audience's interpretation of mass media texts	24
2.3.2 Feeling the suffering of others: Audience's responses and reactions	25
2.3.3 Types of audience compassion	28
2.3.4 Compassion fatigue	29
2.3.5 Imagined communities and solidarity: what makes us human beings	31
2.3.6 Forms of solidarity	32
2.3.7 Audience participation	33
2.4 The telethon	33
2.4.1 The television marathon	33
2.4.2 The three main telethon characteristics	35
2.4.3 The telethon format	36
2.4.4 The role of celebrities	39
2.4.5 The advertising of telethons	40

3) Methodological Framework	42
3.1 In-depth Interviews	43
3.2 Survey	47
3.3 Document Analysis	51
3.4 The Case Study: <i>La Marató de TV3</i>	51
4) Results	54
4.1 The In-depth Interviews	54
4.1.1 Compassion (H1)	54
4.1.2 Relationship harsh images of children – Emotionality – Donations (H2)	57
4.1.3 Success factors of <i>La Marató de TV3</i> (H3)	59
4.1.4 The particular case of the 2010 <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 's spot (H4)	61
4.2 The Survey	64
4.2.1 Compassion (H1)	64
4.2.2 Relationship harsh images of children – Emotionality – Donations (H2)	68
4.2.3 Success factors of <i>La Marató de TV3</i> (H3)	71
4.2.4 The particular case of the 2010 <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 's spot (H4)	77
4.3 Document Analysis	78
5) Conclusion and Discussion	81
6) Bibliography	87
7) Appendices	92
<u>Appendix A: Document Analysis</u>	92
Audience curve <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 2010	92
<u>Appendix B: In-depth Interviews</u>	93
The General Interview Guide	93
Interview Guide – Carme Basté	94
Interview Guide – Xavier Abad	94
Interview Guide – Carles Checa	94
Interview Guide – Joan-Carles Mèlich	95
Transcripts of the in-depth interviews	CD
Transcript Interview – Carme Basté	CD
Transcript Interview – Xavier Abad	CD
Transcript Interview – Carles Checa	CD
Transcript Interview – Joan-Carles Mèlich	CD

<u>Appendix C: Survey</u>	CD
Sample of the Online Survey	CD
Frequencies of some relevant variables (SPSS)	CD
Some cross tabulations (SPSS)	CD

Table of Figures

Images

Images 1: The final recollection of the 2010 <i>La Marató de TV3</i> at 1.30pm	9
Images 2: The singular brother's case of the 2010 <i>La Marató de TV3</i>	58
Images 3: Dick and Rick's television advertisement, edition 2010	62

Tables

Table 1: Details of the experts interviewees	45
Table 2: Call's number of the 2009 and 2010 editions of <i>La Marató de TV3</i>	80

Graphs

Graph 1: Geographical distribution of sample	48
Graph 2: Occupation of respondents	49
Graph 3: Feelings or emotions while watching <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 2010	64
Graph 4: Moment that the audiences have donated to <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 2010.....	72
Graph 5: The four motivations to donate or participate to <i>La Marató de TV3</i>	73
Graph 6: The compassion fatigue thesis	75
Graph 7: The main success factors of <i>La Marató de TV3</i>	76

Cross Tabulations

Cross Tabulation 1: Gender – Emotion/sensibility watching <i>La Marató de TV3</i> 2010 ($p=0.004$)	66
Cross Tabulation 2: Gender – Willing to donate/participate ($p=0.04$)	68
Cross Tabulation 3: Emotion feeling – Participate/donate to <i>La Marató de TV3</i> ($p=0.000$)	69
Cross Tabulation 4: Pity for Marina – Participate/donate to <i>La Marató de TV3</i> ($p=0.50$)	70
Cross Tabulation 5: Participate/donate to <i>La Marató de TV3</i> – to other causes ($p=0.10$)	71
Cross Tabulation 6: Sensibility while watching the spot – audience activation ($p=0.000$)	78

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world we see poverty, hunger, diseases and life-threatening situations in the media every day; charity donations have become crucial as any kind of financial help can improve the lives of the underprivileged in a certain way. We live in a society where disasters and problems exist and the consequences of modernity have an implication for the state and social organization, what Beck described as a "world risk society" (1999). Beck's thesis is an attempt to comprehend the relation between technology, science, political and social institutions and the risk consequences of that for the individual people and the society as a whole. The media triggers action from citizens of a society to improve the situation. By confronting us with these disasters, it creates a level of consciousness that makes us want to help the sufferers. In this context, "the audience is expected to respond as good citizens with compassion" (Höijer, 2004, p.513), which is the reaction created by the awareness of other person's suffering occasioned for their misfortune produced by the media (Nussbaum, 2001 & Chouliaraki, 2006b) and it is linked to the understanding that the world should not be like this (Tester, 2001).

Authors such as Moeller (1999), Tester (2001), Sontag (2004), Chouliaraki (2006b) and Cottle (2008) point out that audiences have become "passive and desensitized to the repetitive shuffle of suffering and disaster" (Ong, 2008, p.3) and consequently charity donations may decrease (Devereux, 1996). However, telethons, a lengthy television program, achieve large amounts of attention, involvement, donations, and participation from audiences year after year. One particular reason why audiences may react positively to telethon and not to news coverage may be "the fact that in telethon television, the images we see of poverty and need are sanitized and relatively invisible in the wider context of a program which emphasizes entertainment and fund-raising" (Devereux, 1996, p.64). However, is this the only reason of the success of these telethons? This will be discussed during this study.

To understand the success of telethons, it is important to focus on the media representation of disasters, poverty, and related contents that create these feelings of compassion or charity. It is also crucial to look at different forms of emotional involvement of the audience as a result of perceiving those images, and their reactions and responses, of which compassion and pity are key examples. To analyze these different aspects we will use as a case study the Catalan telethon *La Marató de TV3*, which is a 16 hour-long television program that achieves the most fundraising in Spain. This leads to the following main research question:

RQ: *What are the success factors of La Marató de TV3 during a time when 'compassion fatigue' is known to exist (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008) along with a financial crisis in Spain?*

This question will be answered during the theoretical and the methodological framework, the results, and the conclusion of this research study. To give an understanding of this case study, different important aspects will be explained in the theoretical section. The structure of the theoretical framework is divided into four sections: compassion, mediated compassion and suffering, the audiences and the telethon. The telethon has been situated at the end of the theory chapter, as it encompasses all other aspects discussed in the previous chapters.

La Marató de TV3, which is the case study, is an annual telethon, created in 1992, with a purpose to raise funds for scientific research into diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer, chronic pain and mental diseases that are currently incurable. Each year *La Marató* is devoted to one incurable illness and the benefits of it are given to research projects. Raising funds is not the only important task for *La Marató de TV3*, it also aims to increase community awareness of scientific research and its importance and meaning for society and health (<http://www.tv3.cat/marato/>), which could be one of the reasons of the success of this telethon and will be discussed in the results section.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the reasons why this Catalan telethon is so successful in receiving high amounts of donations, participation and popularity. In particular we will study the most recent edition, which was broadcast on Sunday 19 December 2010. The money was raised for people with acquired spinal cord and brain injuries. This last edition collected a total of

8,735,103 Euros, the highest amount raised in the program history. This can seem contradictory with the fact that some authors such as Moeller (1999), Tester (2001), Sontag (2004), Chouliaraki (2006b) and Cottle (2008) explain that there is compassion fatigue amongst the audience along with the recent financial crisis in Spain¹.



We have a variety of aspects to consider related to the success of *La Marató de TV3*. Therefore we believe it is important to study the telethon from many different points of views. We will consider the point of view of the producers of the television program (by conducting semi-structured interviews), from the audience's point of view (by conducting an online survey), and a document

¹ http://www.elpais.com/graficos/economia/crisis/economica/Espana/elpgraeco/20080903elpepueco_1/Ges/

analysis to contextualize the results from the other. Therefore, in order to collect all relevant data we have applied three main methods: in-depth interviews, online survey and document analysis. The use of multiple methods to study the same fact is called a methodological triangulation, which is used in this research study (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000), as it strengthens the validity of the findings and complements the results from each method (Greene & McClintock, 1985).

In order to answer the key research question, we propose four main hypotheses:

H1: *Catalan spectators of the 2010 La Marató de TV3 experience feelings of compassion and empathy towards people suffering, but not necessarily pity. Women experience more feelings of compassion than men.*

H2: *In telethons, particularly in La Marató de TV3 2010, a relationship exists between (1) the harsh or graphic images of sick children by which the audience perceives their suffering, (2) the audience's emotionality (feelings of compassion, empathy or pity), and (3) the willingness to donate and to participate in a telethon.*

H3: *The reason why people participate and donate so much to La Marató de TV3 is not merely because of the compassionate feelings, but for other reasons such as the community feeling, the proximity the program has with the Catalan people, and the potential to generate identification of the audience with the sufferers.*

H4: *The carefully built up credibility of the project La Marató de TV3 among its audiences is a key element in its current success.*

The results section will be organized in relation to the four hypotheses, as they are the main focus of this research study. And finally, the research question of this study will be answered in the conclusion and discussion section.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to answer the research question presented in this study, a theoretical framework has to be outlined that provides the background for this research and the analysis of its results. The question that must be addressed throughout this research is: “if audiences do not respond or react identically to all representations of suffering that media broadcast, and compassion fatigue is also a factor (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008), does this mean that there is a difference between representations of suffering? If so, what is that difference?” This issue will be analyzed and discussed throughout the study to try to understand the reason why telethons have the capacity to secure audience attention and participation/donation year after year, whilst compassion fatigue theory (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008) would find this difficult to explain.

The following section presents a thorough understanding of the literature surrounding mediated suffering as a main concept, which relates to feelings such as compassion and empathy. These different concepts - empathy, sympathy, compassion and pity - are analyzed in the first section of this chapter in order to clearly differentiate each concept. Then, mediated compassion is studied by analyzing how the media represent suffering. Moreover, the audience is studied from different points of view, and their interpretations, feelings, actions, and reactions as a consequence of consuming mediated suffering are analyzed. Robins (1994) states, “to watch television in our culture is to be exposed to violence, suffering and death” (as cited in Kyriakidou, 2008, p.157). Finally, telethons are examined from different perspectives.

2.1 Compassion

2.1.1 Sympathy, Empathy, Pity and Compassion

The work of Arthur Schopenhauer (1995), Friedrich Nietzsche (Cartwright, 1984), Martha Nussbaum (2001), and Birgitta Höijer (2004) demonstrate a considerable academic interest in the emotion of compassion. The concept of “compassion” frequently makes its appearance under different terms such as “sympathy”, “empathy”, and “pity” (Woodward, 2002). Although pity, compassion, empathy and sympathy are often used interchangeably as they are commonly used for talking about feelings of caring for someone else, it is appropriate to consider them as referring to different degrees or kinds of caring. The tradition to regard these four words as synonymous is understandable on the practice of viewing them as simply associated feelings, feelings that “involve participation in another’s emotional life” (Cartwright, 1988, p.558).

However, following Tester (2001, p.18), the concept of compassion will be reserved for describing compassion for the suffering of others in the *public* sphere. Other concepts, such as empathy,

sympathy, pity or even altruism, may also be relevant, but “they do not include the same public and political dimensions as the concept of compassion” (Höijer, 2004, p.514). The first idea to consider here is that empathy and sympathy, which have been defined in multiple ways, are more general than either compassion or pity. Although pity and compassion may be directed towards another’s suffering, sympathy and empathy may be directed towards another’s pleasure as well as suffering (Cartwright, 1988). Empathy requires sharing the perceived emotion of another – “feeling with” another –, which can be suffering or pleasure, and sympathy is basically “feeling for” someone, which is always pleasure (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1990, p. 5-6). Thus, empathy involves perceiving the feelings experienced by another person, while sympathy is an emotional concern for the welfare of another person (Small & Verrochi, 2009). Therefore, sympathy is far from the suffering of others, and subsequently it is not relevant for this study.

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche used the word *Mitleid* to describe “suffering with another” (Cartwright, 1988). Since sympathy is more general than either compassion or pity, and both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche emphasized that *Mitleid* involves our suffering because another suffers, Cartwright (1988) ignores the English concept of “sympathy” as an equivalent of *Mitleid*. As mentioned before, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche used the same word *Mitleid*; however, both refer to two different emotions: it is suitable to understand Schopenhauer’s conception of *Mitleid* as compassion and Nietzsche’s as pity (Cartwright, 1988).

On the one hand, Nietzsche argues that *Mitleid* may be an “emotion through which we can cultivate a sense of our own power” (Cartwright, 1988, p.563). That means that people help sufferers to exercise their power. Cartwright (1988) analyses Nietzsche’s *Mitleid* and explains that it is a self-regarding emotion that people have towards others who are suffering; one that involves both a lack of respect for another and aid as a strategy for augmenting one’s feeling of self-respect and superiority by depreciating others. Thus, Cartwright (1988) finally concludes that the notion of *Mitleid* for Nietzsche refers to pity. Pity is considered an emotion fundamentally different from compassion. When someone pities someone else, it in a way humiliates the sufferer, since the helper is in some way better off than the person who is pitied (Cartwright, 1988). In general, people do not pity other people who they respect or are superiors; thus by pitying other people they lift up themselves. Therefore, pity is a self-regarding action.

On the other hand, Schopenhauer’s conception of *Mitleid* is compassion, which is, like pity, directed towards another’s suffering. However, compassion is ultimately other-regarding and not self-regarding. Thus, compassion has an altruistic purpose because its end is another’s well being (Schopenhauer, 1995). Moreover, compassion is a belief that the world does not have to be like

“this”; thus it involves a judgment of what is the case from the perspective of “what ought to be the case” (Tester, 2001, p.21).

2.1.2 Compassion: the Pursuit of Another’s Well Being

Each human action is intentional and based on human motivation, resulting “in agreement with or contrary to a being’s will” (Schopenhauer, 1995, p.141; Ortega & Mínguez, 2007). By identifying human actions in agreement with a person’s will or well-being (weal), and human actions contrary to a person’s will or misfortune (woe), the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer argued that there are four ultimate ends for human actions; one’s own weal, one’s own woe, another’s weal, and another’s woe.

These four separate ends become four different motives or incentives for actions: *Mitleid* (compassion), a desire for another’s well-being; egoism, a desire for one’s own well-being; malice, a desire for another’s misfortune; and an unnamed incentive, a desire for one’s own misfortune. *Mitleid* is the motive for morally advantageous actions; compassion is the source of emotional attitudes of altruism and selfless help. Egoism cannot confer moral worth on actions because the ethical significance of any action lies only in reference to others (Cartwright, 1984). Every human action “must be attributed to one of these incentives, although two can act in combination” (Schopenhauer, 1995, p.145).

Schopenhauer viewed compassion as the only motive for morally valuable actions since its ultimate end is another’s well being (Cartwright, 2008). Schopenhauer holds the idea that all satisfaction, well being and happiness consist in the prevention or elimination of suffering, thus he immediately connects compassion to the pursuit of another’s well-being (Schopenhauer, 1995). He describes compassion itself as:

... the immediate participation, independent of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the suffering of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; [...] As soon as this compassion is aroused, the weal and woe of another are nearest to my heart in exactly the same way, although not always in exactly the same degree, as otherwise only my own are. Hence the difference between him [the other] and me is now no longer absolute (Schopenhauer, 1995, p.144).

In the book *On the Basis of Morality*, which contains Schopenhauer’s main analysis of compassion, he claims that it involves the truly extraordinary experience of another’s suffering; an experience that requires not a naturalistic or psychological explanation, but a metaphysical explanation. The author claims, “we remain clearly conscious that he is the sufferer, not we; and it is precisely in his person, not in ours, that we feel the suffering, to our sorrow. We suffer with him and hence in him; we feel his pain as his, and do not imagine that it is ours” (Schopenhauer, 1995, p.147).

Compassion is an emotion involving suffering, and a belief to the effect that someone else is suffering. To commiserate with someone, you have to believe that this person is suffering, and it is essential to experience the other's suffering as your own. However, before someone can believe the suffering of another, he/she needs to be aware of it, and this emphasizes the role and the importance of media, which will be discussed at the next section. Some authors such as Martha Nussbaum (2001) and Francesc Torralba (2010) have opposite ideas about compassion than Schopenhauer; they consider that to experience the victim's suffering as your own suffering is essential to use the imagination, which is the main factor of this process. Schopenhauer (1995), however, considers that the person who has compassion feels the pain of the sufferer as his pain, but does not imagine that this pain is his pain. Torralba argues that "compassion is the inner experience of the suffering of others" (2010)². He sees imagination as the powerful faculty of the soul that allows moving people out of their being and putting them in the shoes of the other. He explains that without imagination there is no compassion. Imagination allows representing the suffering of the other as our own suffering.

Suffering is a universal experience that does not lend itself to categorical privileging or differential consideration. As a virtue, compassion is not selective; as an incentive for action, the desirability of compassion endures independent of the 'who, what, where, when, and why' of suffering's existence (Williams, 2008, p.11).

This means that it is possible to have compassion for the suffering of any kind of person and in any situation. However, compassion also involves a discernment of the similarity between oneself and the sufferer, which is called a "compassion filter" (Williams, 2008, p.11). Thus, compassion will be limited to cases in which the self sees the other who suffers as similar to herself. Compassion will be restricted in proportion to the degree that people separate themselves from the other emotionally, physically, cognitively and metaphysically (Williams, 2008). The proximity between sufferer and viewer, which must exist to have compassionate feelings, will be discussed later when mediated suffering is discussed.

Compassion can create groups or boundaries, such as social, geographical, or cultural boundaries, possibly hindering people from different social or cultural groups to feel compassion toward each other. The necessity of the assessments of similarity means the suffering of another will arouse the self concern only insofar as he/she acknowledges some degree of community between him/her and the sufferer (Nussbaum, 2001, p.317). However, these communities do not need to be defined in relation to geographical territories or social variables (Williams, 2008), and they can only exist when shared moral values exist among people (Schopenhauer, 1995).

² <http://blogs.ccrvi.com/oficidiviure.php?itemid=30645>

Schopenhauer (1995) describes how the suffering of others can move people to act or fail to move people to act; either as an encouragement for active assistance to reduce the pain of other, or a restraint to alleviate the suffering of the other (Ortega & Mínguez, 2007). Based on the fundamental motivation, Schopenhauer (1995) points out that people act when they have motivation to a certain extent; however, this motivation should always have a relation with pleasure or with pain, and it cannot be an egoist action to have moral value. Therefore, the spectator will or will not be motivated by images displaying the suffering of others, and as a consequence, either an active reaction, helping the sufferer, or passive reaction, doing nothing, will be the result. In this context, compassion is based on the self-purpose to participate in another's suffering, creating identification between different people and at the same time, even community bonding between these groups of people that share this compassionate feeling.

2.1.3 The Moral Foundation of Social Justice

At the moment that people can imagine themselves as the other, the force of compassion emerges and as a consequence the social justice too. Social justice has been and continues to be defined in a variety of ways, but Williams describes it as “the development and sustenance of social conditions within which all persons have the greatest opportunity to realize their potentialities, both as unique individuals and as members of greater communities and societies” (2008, p.7). As explained, in compassion the distinction between the self and the other disappears; “that this entire difference between me and everyone else, which is the very basis of my egoism, is eliminated, to a certain extent at least” (Schopenhauer, 1995, p.143-144). In this context, compassion becomes a lived reality, and through this the community and social justice emerge (Williams, 2008).

Arguably, compassion stands as a necessary element of the social character these days and it is central to concerns of social justice and community (Williams, 2008). Social justice is based on a collective ethic in which people give importance to the interests and needs of others. It is in this respect that the virtue of compassion, which is most fundamentally other-regarding, becomes an essential humanistic virtue for community construction (Williams, 2008). For this reason, Williams (2008) understands compassion as the “moral foundation of social justice” (p.8). The pursuit of social justice demands a moral and spiritual revolution, which requires having an exercise of compassion in interpersonal, institutional and global contexts (Williams, 2008).

2.2 Mediated Compassion and Suffering

2.2.1 The Mass Media in a Social Context

We live in a media-saturated society, where the role of the media is influential in our everyday lives (Livingstone, 2009). Citizens have become dependent on the media for the conduct of everyday life but the media are also insignificant without citizens (Silverstone, 2007). People understand the world and their position in it through the media (Livingstone, 2009). Media are an environment that we live with, in and through. Thus, the mass media play an important role in the construction of social reality (Adoni & Mane, 1984); and for this reason it is important to understand the mass media in a social context.

Devereux (2007) points out that it is relevant to comprehend the social significance of mass media at both macro and micro levels. At the macro level, the “mass media are an important agent of transformation and social change” (p.13). They play an important role in reproducing reality and in providing a continuity of social inequalities that exist in the world at local, national and global levels.

At a micro level, the mass media are essential agents of socialization. They are a powerful source of social meaning and occupy a significant amount of people’s leisure time. They reproduce social norms, beliefs, ideologies, discourses and values (Devereux, 2007). During a single day, people are exposed to a considerable amount of media texts where different inequalities are represented. This alters the understanding people have about the social world in terms of these inequalities.

Chouliaraki (2008a) also analyzes the media from the perspective as ‘producer of social meaning’, and she includes the idea that “the media have the power to constitute this audience as a body of action in the process of narrating and visualizing distant events” (p.832). Thus, media texts contribute to promote an ethics of care and responsibility, and so, they promote also to act towards these media texts. In the case of images displaying other people suffering, the media promote the audience to be engaged and act toward the other.

According to Bell (1998), there is a relation between morality and journalism, “we in the press and especially in television [...], do not stand apart from the world. We are part of it. We exercise a certain influence, and we have to know that” (as cited in Tester, 2001, p.10). He argues that a journalism of attachment is necessary. This kind of journalism means that journalism is not neutral, and has the opportunity to differentiate between right and the wrong, good and evil; it is a journalism that cares as well as knows. However, journalists do not always achieve what they want, and there is a distance between the moral intentionality of journalists and the moral action that audiences carry out (Tester, 2001).

2.2.2 The Mediated Representation: Guiding Audience's Actions

Mediated representation refers to the construction in any medium, especially the mass media, of aspects of 'reality' such as people, objects, places, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts (Dyer, 1993). These representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures, depending on the medium. To represent reality by the media, reality has to be framed. Although almost all texts seem natural and real, they are not transparent since they are constructed³ representations of reality by the media. The audience has to interpret these representations by making moral judgments (Silverstone, 2007), and these moral judgments determine audience's consequent actions.

In his book *Media and Morality, on the Rise of the Mediapolis*, Silverstone (2007) describes the concept of *mediapolis* as the representation of the media, defining it as:

The mediated space of appearance in which the world appears and in which the world is constituted in its worldliness, and through which we learn about those who are and who are not like us (p.31).

What happens in social life is what takes place in mass media texts, and what takes place in mass media texts is dependent on political interests. The media's power depends on how they deal with these political interests. In this context, "the world and its players appear in the media, and for most of us that is the only place they do appear. Appearance itself becomes, in both senses of the word, the world" (Silverstone, 2007, p.30). Appearance becomes reality; and this concept is also applicable to disasters and crises. Most people have never experienced a disaster or disease in their life, however these events become their most common experience as a result of their media experience and exposure (Boltanski, 1999; Silverstone, 2007). The visibility of the other, the "stranger," is what makes the *mediapolis* what it is (Silverstone, 2007). The media are formed by the use of different narratives and images, and by choosing specific narratives and images they provide the vision of what they want to show; for example, suffering, hope, conflict, or cooperation.

These concepts are explicitly seen in telethons, a televised charity event that lasts several hours. A telethon's purpose is to achieve the action of donation or participation from the audience to improve the quality of sufferers' lives. To achieve that goal, telethons aim to create a well-performed narration as a combination of images and language that activate the audience to participate or donate, most of the time by producing a sense of compassion (Tester, 2001). Also, the selection of the witnesses that are people who gives testimony is an important factor known to produce compassion easily. When compassion is achieved, audiences feel the suffering of the witnesses that are shown in the telethon, and as a result, some of them donate money to improve sufferers'

³ Theory of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1967): the social construction of reality is a process in which human beings act both as the creators and as products of their social world (as cited in Adoni & Mane, 1984).

situation. In this context, there is a crucial connection between media representation and public action (Chouliaraki, 2008a).

The purpose of media representation is not only to “re-present the world to its audiences but also to propose to them how to think and feel about the world” (Chouliaraki, 2008a, p.838). From this perspective of mediation as a moral education, Chouliaraki (2008a) analyzes two analytical implications. Firstly, the aesthetic quality of representation is the way in which media introduce stories of suffering, including images and language of sufferers to achieve the audience’s morality and actions towards suffering. In this sense, the aesthetic characteristic stimulates the emotions, rather than the intellect. Secondly, “the exercise of power in the media cannot be narrowly understood in terms of the voyeurism of seduction or the passivity of refeudalization” (2008a, p.838). The point that Chouliaraki is willing to make here is that the power of the media should be understood in a larger sense than to just expose suffering. Thus media can do much more than just seduce people to feel compassion and thus, donate. They give access to scenes of suffering, increasing awareness of the problem which helps relief organizations.

2.2.3 Compassion in a Mediated Context

There has been considerable debate regarding the concept of compassion created by the media. Diverse authors such as Boltanski (1999), Tester (2001), Nussbaum (2001), Höijer (2004), Sontag (2004) and Chouliaraki (2006b) study compassion and the media from different points of view. As some authors state, compassion is created by the awareness of other persons’ suffering which can be produced by the media (Chouliaraki, 2006b & Nussbaum, 2001). Thus, the media are able to enable feelings of compassion in the audience, according to some scholars such as Nussbaum (2001), Höijer (2004) and Chouliaraki (2006b). However, would there be compassion for suffering as obvious without the media production of images of suffering? This could be linked to Boltanski (1999) and his concept of distant suffering, in that people are not witnessing the suffering first-hand, but through the media.

Höijer (2004) explains that compassion is a moral sensibility that “has to do with perceiving the suffering and needs of distant others through media images and reports” (p.514) and Tester (2001) adds that it is linked to “the belief that the world does not have to be like this” (p.21). Although this is a personal feeling mostly produced by experiencing the suffering of others, the media can produce compassion to some people at a certain moment by using different contexts, techniques, images and sounds (Moeller, 1999). Thus, the media can be a powerful tool having an effect on the feelings and the behavior of their audiences, as explained above.

The best-known way in which the media create compassion is the format of the telethon. The requisite feature of a telethon is the representation of the suffering of others by reportages and direct interviews. By doing this, the viewer can identify himself or herself with the other, and then, he/she could feel compassion for the sufferer. Basically, telethons are creating a compassionate feeling in their audience to make them believe that the program needs their contribution for the solidarity project, a project aimed at uniting a community to raise money to help people in need (Smit, 2003). Telethons will be explained in detail in the last section of the theoretical framework.

While some authors are talking about compassion, some others mention the pity concept in media studies. Silverstone (2007) makes a clear differentiation between both concepts: “compassion relies on identification with the plight of another. It is personal, and individual. Compassion takes place in private. Pity, on the other hand, is public, political and generalizable” (p.131), which is produced by an extent of media techniques and discourses, as Chouliaraki (2006b) points out. Silverstone’s statement of the privacy of compassion contradicts the compassion in the public sphere of Tester (2001). Following Tester, the concept of compassion is reserved in Höijer’s (2004) article for the suffering of others in the public sphere. Therefore, compassion is a controversial concept; it is considered as a public or private emotion depending on the author. By conducting an expert interview we will be able to address this aspect of compassion.

2.2.3.1 The Other’s Representation

Through the representation of the media, and especially through the moving images of television, people have become aware of the suffering of other people. Silverstone (2007) argues that the mediated appearance is defining the relationship between “the audiences and the distant other who only exists in the media” (p.110). This idea has a connection with Boltanski (1999), who discusses the fact that people do not have a direct connection with the distant other, but they witness the suffering through the media. In this context, the other can be geographically as well as psychologically distant from the other. The media are able to reduce and alter the distance between the viewers and the far away others. It works as symbols that generate sociability across dispersed times and spaces (Chouliaraki, 2008b, p.372). Ong (2008) explains this notion in relation to the orientation to the stranger, which means a “welcoming of difference” (p.450), a willingness to engage with the other. However, this does not mean that being exposed to a distant other automatically makes people willing to engage with them.

The representation of the other in the media is similar to the findings of Said (1995) found in his book *Orientalism*. In *Orientalism*, Said asserts that some Western literature of the Orient were not objective, and he identifies that in these studies the East was represented as an irrational, weak

other, in contrast with the rational, strong and masculine West. Said (1995) identifies this as a form of racism, and a tool of imperialist domination, which creates divisions between the West and the East. Simplified, the West represents the other, through the media, like a counter-part to its own values. This is used as a tool to strengthen national identity (Khatib, 2006).

The reproduction of the media is decided by the global social inequality. "The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power and of domination" (Said, 1995, p.5). Chouliaraki (2006b) relates this idea and argues that the mediated representation of the suffering of the other reflects the political and economic power relations. This has the consequence of the differentiation between "us" and the "other." Therefore, the media are always representing the other as just that - the other, and not as someone like us; Eastern people are always represented as someone not from the Western "community". Therefore, the question is: how do the media achieve identification between the viewer and the distant sufferer to generate participation or responsibility of this suffering of the distant other?

2.2.3.2 Proper Distance

The mediated suffering, specifically in telethons, normally combines camera work and voiceover in order to establish a degree of proximity between the spectator and the scene of suffering, and to propose certain possibilities of action upon the suffering (Chouliaraki, 2006a). This representation of images creates "specific semantic fields where emotions and dispositions to action vis-a-vis the suffering of 'others' are evoked for the spectator" (Chouliaraki, 2006a, p.262). Therefore, at the moment that the media broadcasts images of the suffering of other people, the viewers could be willing to have emotions for those images and those emotions could trigger reactions in terms of donations or participation, in the case of the telethon.

Ignatieff (1998) contends that television "makes us voyeurs of the suffering of others, tourists amid their landscapes of anguish. It brings us face-to-face with their fate, while obscuring the distances – social, economic, moral – that lie between us" (as cited in Tester, 1999, p.472). Thus, people know about the suffering of others because of the media and this offers them the chance to introduce these strangers in their moral conscience (Höijer, 2004). The proper distance that television creates between viewer and sufferer generates to its audiences the sense of responsibility for the other.

Chouliaraki's (2006a) writings induce the notion of proper distance that Silverstone (2007) applies in his analysis of media work. Silverstone defines proper distance as:

... [the] understanding [of] the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationship if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity

but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility, as well as understanding. Proper distance preserves the other through difference as well as through shared identity (p.47).

Chouliaraki (2006a) and Silverstone (2007) point out that people should participate in the global space of appearance, as people engage with the other depending on the proximity and the distance they have in the processes of mediation (Ong, 2009). "Proper distance [...] requires imagination" (Silverstone, 2007, p.48), and imagination requires taking the position of the other, being in his/her body and imagine their situation in your own life. This required imagination to achieve the proper distance is linked to Nussbaum (2001) and Torralba's (2010) perspective which is based on the idea that people cannot have compassion without having imagination. Tester (2001), following ideas of Augustine (1997) and Marshall (1977), explains that people who feel compassionate for strangers are rightly called neighbors. Since strangers are citizens, they should have their rights and responsibilities based on moral obligations. However, it is sometimes necessary that the audience share the same or a similar identity with the other. By producing different kinds of images, the media attempt to create a sense of duty to care for the other. However, compassion produced by the media, Höijer (2004) argues, is dependent on 'ideal victim images' and is expressed differently in male and female audiences.

2.2.3.3 Ideal Victims: Children Suffering

Advertisers have been aware for a long time that pictures of children can be especially effective in getting audiences' attention (Kinsey, 1987, as cited in Tester, 2001, p.82). Children and mothers make 'ideal victims' (Höijer, 2004). Nils Christie's (1986) defines the ideal victim as "a person or a category of individual who – when hit by crime – most readily [is] given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim" (as cited in Smolej, 2010, p. 69). In general, children and mothers are much more suitable to be ideal victims than men, and "only when victims have been identified as 'bona fide' are they candidates for compassion" (Moeller, 1999, p.107), so they should be connected with innocence (Smolej, 2010).

Although the ideal victim can be generalized, it is a "cultural construction" (Höijer, 2004, p.517), so depending on the audience and their culture, the "ideal victim" may vary. Everyone does not understand suffering in the same way; people conceptualize suffering differently depending on social, historical and cultural circumstances. Therefore, when the audience feels close to the sufferer, because they share their culture, religion, country or language, they can identify better with the sufferer and have empathy or compassion more easily (Höijer, 2004)

To analyze these concepts, a study by Dyck and Coldevin (1992) distributed different images to different groups. An image with African children crying to a group of people (negative images) to one

group, an image with African children smiling to a group of people (positive images) to another group, and no picture to a final group. These images were used to ask for a donation. In this study they found unexpected results; firstly, the group with no picture received the highest response rate as well as a final contribution higher than the negative picture group; and secondly, a positive image of a child had a significantly more favorable effect on donations than a negative image. Tester (2001) analyzed this study in the context of compassion, and feels the surprising results are an indication for the compassion fatigue hypothesis. This hypothesis states that people believe there is nothing to be done about the enormity of suffering as a result of the overexposure by the media. Potential donors like to have the feeling that they are donating according to good, and rational and logical reasons. Finally, these authors explain that “text are commonly associated with rationality, pictures with emotion and that, therefore, the all-text mail shot will be identified by its recipients as making a logical argument rather than an emotive one” (Dyck & Coldevin, 1992, p.577).

2.2.3.4 The ‘Ordinary’ Witnesses and the Community Sense

Chouliaraki (2010) analyses the current nature of witnessing, which is based on ‘ordinary’ witnesses that facilitates connectivity with and action on suffering. The power of the media representing the other in the space of appearance by having a discourse based on first-hand testimony and personal opinion (Turner, 2010) makes the moral claim to care. Also in the media reports on suffering turn communities of viewing into imagined communities of feeling. They then may be “potentially acting together towards that suffering” (Chouliaraki, 2010, p.305). The voice of the journalists, which acts as a testimony of suffering by turning experience into discourse, is important to achieve those imagined communities.

Television now uses a new form of witnessing. It does so by replacing the journalist with the citizen as a guarantee of the authenticity of witnessing. It is a new way to send news made by “a citizen with a sense of loyalty to other citizens” (Harcup, 2002, as cited in Chouliaraki, 2010, p.307). This new form of witnessing is used by some telethons. There is a clear manifestation of the moralizing impact of ordinary witnessing which mobilizes a “global activism of solidarity” amongst audiences (Chouliaraki, 2010, p.308) because of the sensibility attachment that this kind of journalism achieves. This sensibility attachment means that journalism is not neutral and not objective; it looks for the emotions of the audience by producing identification between the spectator and the ordinary testimonials (Tester, 2001).

Boltanski (1999) explains that “dramatic action” of suffering in the media should incorporate testimonial elements to evoke an emotive reaction from the audience, although it should also be

presented as objective information that allows the viewers to assess if the suffering is worthy of their response or not. According to Chouliaraki (2010) there are different forms of witnessing, however all of them have a 'unifying' potential: they comprise publics that are 'communitarian', reinforcing a sense of belonging to 'our' own local world, rather than a 'cosmopolitan' one. In summary, post-television journalism challenges the television value of objectivity (Turner, 2010).

2.2.4 Global Compassion: Social Solidarity

A global discourse of compassion has been extended between politics, humanitarian organizations, the media and the citizens (Höijer, 2004). Media frame people's everyday thinking about violence and conflicts in the world that produce suffering among victims. There is an increased exposure of pictures of human suffering among citizens in television news (Höijer, 2004), as quantitative content analysis studies show. Global compassion is considered to be "morally correct in the striving for cosmopolitan democracy, and the international community condemns 'crimes against humanity'" (Höijer, 2004, p.513).

The representation of suffering creates a general connectivity, what Chouliaraki (2006b) calls "social solidarity," and this includes citizens' engagement in communal projects in order to create a better future. "The media are a huge factor in getting people to be generous," explains Orla Quinlan, manager of Oxfam, an international confederation working worldwide to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice (Moeller, 2006, p.182). Höijer (2004) investigates the role of the media in generating enthusiasm for humanitarian organizations that seek to address global inequality. She calls the communal response to the perception of suffering "global compassion", which is "a moral sensibility or concern for remote strangers from different continents, cultures and societies" (p.514). Therefore, the image of suffering presented by the media links groups in their compassion towards those who are suffering, and as a consequence, a sense of community is created. This sense of community is a sense of belonging together, as they feel the same and share some other aspects such as the language, the country, the culture, the religion or the customs. What is particularly interesting here is that this first sense of belonging is what creates the compassionate feelings towards the sufferers.

In this context, four constitutions interact: media, humanitarian organizations, audiences and policy makers. The media are the interactive link between (1) social situations, in which audiences' interpretations and responses develop, (2) humanitarian organizations, and (3) politics. "The humanitarian organizations are dependent on the public as citizens giving monetary gifts, the media are dependent on the public as an audience paying attention to their texts and programs, and policy makers are dependent on the public as opinion" (Höijer, 2004, p.518). Thus, in this context where the

media are playing a mediating role between humanitarian organizations, politics and the public, the focus on the public as the audience for humanitarian reporting in the media is an important aspect to consider since they are who will decide if the humanitarian organization or the media itself will have success or not. This only depends on the audience's response and action. For this reason, this study focuses on the *audience* and their reactions toward suffering content.

2.3 Audiences

The purpose of this section is not to explain the history of the various traditional approaches of media audiences, but it is about the reception of media texts by audiences and their reactions towards mediated suffering. Moreover, as a consequence of audiences' reactions towards mediated suffering, solidarity action and participation in different charity organizations could emerge. The concept of audience is understood here as the "imagined unity" (Tester, 2001) that is constituted by those people who read, listen or watch media content by a newspaper, radio, television or Internet. This is a very simple definition of audience, but it is sufficient for this study. The audience concept is considered an imaginative concept since the audience is "recognized as an audience on the basis of the role that is played by the media in the constitution of the possibility of particular types of social and cultural imagination and practice" (Tester, 2001, p.45).

2.3.1 Audience's Interpretation of Mass Media Texts

People use the media to know about the world, to be aware of what is going on. The concept of audience has been studied from many different perspectives, such as the audience's interpretations, the audience's reactions, and the audience's actions. The definition of audience has certainly been changed throughout its history, and especially as a result of technological advancement. In general, the audience is considered to be a number of people who receive a message through any kind of media. There is an essential relation between media and their audiences (Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2006).

In the conceptualization of televisive communication, including telethons, the encoding/decoding model of the British sociologist Stuart Hall represents an important development in audience studies. It analyzes television programs as a stage in a process; "a product of a specific set of signifying practices (encoding) whose meanings are ultimately fixed by a second set of signifying practices (decoding)" (Wren-Lewis, 1983, p.179). Therefore, encoding is a signifying practice selecting and interpreting a whole world of signifiers, while decoding deals with exclusively televisual objects. The program thus becomes a "framework of preferred structures of meanings which have been encoded" (Hall, 1976, as cited in Wren-Lewis, 1983, p.180). In this context, the television program, and in the

case of this study, the telethon is the point between both processes, between encoding and decoding. Therefore, this study uses different research methods to investigate both processes: (1) encoding, by conducting expert interviews of the production process with references to the content, and (2) decoding, by distributing an online survey to achieve the opinion of the audience.

In an essay entitled 'Encoding/Decoding', Hall (1976) proposes a model of mass communication that emphasizes the importance of active interpretation within appropriate codes. Hall referred to several phases in the Encoding/Decoding model of communication, production, circulation, distribution, consumption, and reproduction (1980, p.128). Corner (1983) explains that the moment of encoding refers to the production practice; the moment of the text is "the... symbolic construction [...] the form and content of what is published or broadcast" (Corner, 1983, p.267); and finally, the moment of decoding is "the moment of reception or consumption" (ibid.).

Moreover, Hall (1976) stresses the role of social positioning in the interpretation of mass media texts by different social groups; thus, the moments of encoding and decoding are dependent on the status group and identity in which readers pertain. If the readers do not adopt the mass media codes as their own social identities, decoding is likely to be different from the encoder's intended meaning. This links to the concept of 'agency' of the public, which is the way in which each person pertains to and which adjust the reading of each media text.

Corner (1983) argues that it is not easy to find actual examples of media texts in which one reading is preferred within a plurality of possible readings (Corner, 1983, p.279). Wren-Lewis (1983) expands on this idea when he states, "the fact that many decoders will come up with the same reading does not make that meaning an essential part of the text" (p.184). Finally, Morley (1992) employed Hall's model in his studies of how different social groups interpret a television program. He insists that he did not take a socially deterministic position in which individual 'decoding' of a text are reduced to a direct consequence of social class position; "It is always a question of how social position [...] produces specific kinds of readings or decodings" (Morley, 1992, p.89-90). Thus, if the social status and the identity of each person vary the interpretation of media text, would mediated suffering vary as well?

2.3.2 Feeling the Suffering of Others: Audience's Responses and Reactions

Images of disasters and scenes of human suffering have become a regular component of media content. "To watch television in our culture is", in the words of Robins (1994), "to be exposed to violence, suffering and death" (as cited in Kyriakidou, 2008, p.157). This statement points to the idea that an important part of the way "the globe appears on the world's screens" (Silvestone, 2007, p.10)

is through images of tragedy and suffering. As such, the media are implicitly involved in a “global discourse of compassion” (Höijer, 2004), which has resulted in the increased capacity and willingness to take the perspective of the other, and to put oneself into the position of the suffering victims (Beck, 2006, p.6). This requires that people orient themselves towards what the sufferers appear to be experiencing (Tester, 2001). However, Tester (2001) points out that the spectacle of suffering does not always move the viewer to feel compassion. A large amount of academic literature has been dedicated to the possibility of the construction of emotional bonds between audiences and suffering others.

Due to the intense nature of images used to convey suffering, audience members have different reactions. Sensitive and harsh images do not tend to leave the audiences indifferent; they usually produce some sort of reaction from the audience. This can cause a division in the global audience, those who express some type of compassion, and those who are more or less careless or indifferent (Höijer, 2004). Television is the main medium that produces a collective global compassion because of its reach and visual impact.

As explained before, different people react differently to the same media content; therefore, there is a big plurality of reactions by the audience (Hall, 1976; Wren-Lewis, 1983; Höijer, 2004; Ibrahim, 2010). Morley (2001) demonstrates that each television context can have more than one meaning. The suffering in the news is in reality open to thousand interpretations. Devereux (2007) concludes, “while we accept that media texts have the power to shape and frame audience interpretations, we can never be fully sure how audiences will interpret media content” (p.237). Moreover, Kyriakidou (2008) has done an empirical study of Greek audiences and their reactions to distant disasters, and she found that expressions of empathy towards suffering victims were related to the social status, the lifestyle, and the age of the audience.

Kuipers and de Kloet (2009) and La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) discover that audience’s interpretation varies between countries as well as between people from the same country, and that someone’s cultural background influences the interpretation and acceptance of media content. Therefore, other more complex factors are involved with how audiences receive media texts. “The mechanisms that explain differences in reception – shared ideologies, possibilities for identification, parasocial interaction, and social and institutional production of repertoires of evaluation – are not necessarily bound by the nation-state” (Kuipers & de Kloet, 2009, p.104). Davis (1983) has demonstrated that there are two principal emotional reactions to mediated suffering: empathic concern and personal distress. The first one refers to feelings of warmth, compassion, and sympathy

that an observer has for an unfortunate other; personal distress refers to the personal feelings of unease and distress that one can experience when faced with such a situation (Davis, 1983, p.223).

Davis (1983) conducted a study to explore the effects of emphatic predispositions on viewing and contributing to the annual muscular dystrophy telethon. Davis defines empathy as “a tendency to experience sympathy and concern for others” (p.223). The telethon that Davis analyzed “seems clearly designed to induce in viewers the specific type of empathy – empathic concern – that has been linked to altruism and helping behavior.” This study provides clear empirical support for the multi-dimensional nature of empathy. People with higher scores on the empathic concern scale developed by Davis were more likely both to watch the telethon and to contribute their time, effort, and money as a result. The second important conclusion was that a personal distress reaction is a “self-oriented” reaction of personal discomfort, which could be related to the concept of “pity” as explained previously.

Boltanski (1999), in his extensive examination of the politics of pity, has created a typology to classifying human engagement with distant suffering, where the sentiment of pity can be located in how audiences engage with suffering. Audiences engage with distant suffering through three forms of emotional commitment: the act of denunciation of an event, the degree of empathy directed at the victim (the mode of sentiment), or the aestheticization of suffering. This distinction can be compared to Chouliaraki’s (2008a) in that she discusses three distinct forms of spectatorial agency: the spectator as voyeur, the spectator as philanthropist, and the spectator as protester. Thus, how media represent the sufferer contributes to fostering forms of engagements and action towards others and these representations produce different forms of spectatorial agency, which Chouliaraki and Boltanski divide differently into three parts.

Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen (2011) view media as a key site for expressing and managing public emotions. The media coverage of a disaster or suffering is embedded with emotions to a certain degree, whether it focuses on the emotions of individuals directly affected by a tragedy or the collective emotions of the larger community who receive that media coverage. “While grief and compassion are typically emphasized in disaster coverage, there is often also room for anger at those held responsible” (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011, p.108). These two scholars point out four emotional discourses of disaster reception: horror, grief, empathy and anger (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). The emotional discourse of horror is first, due to tragic consequences such as death and destruction. This is followed by the discourse of grief, which focuses on the victims and bereaves families and communities. The discourse of empathy constructs imagined communities of shared loss and finally, the discourse of anger may assign blame.

Tester (2001) analyzes two different reports of mediated suffering, one based on pictures of the overwhelmed famine relief facilities, and the other based on interviews. As the BBC broadcast explains: "Ask anyone in our newsroom which piece they remember and they will tell you it is the first, with its harrowing pictures of a famine at work" (p.9). Tester (2001) points out that mediated suffering has not always produced compassion to the spectator; however this does not mean that without compassion people cannot act, so people can donate in telethons, for example, without feeling compassion, but for other reasons. Therefore, compassion "is not a natural, innate or inevitable ethic" (Tester, 2001, p.20), but it can consequently turn into solidarity actions.

2.3.3 Types of Audience Compassion

People have different feelings of compassion toward suffering (Höijer, 2004). Although it is a difficult task to determine the extent of compassion people feel for victims of distant suffering, Höijer (2004) suggests that compassion is not a feeling that some audiences have it and others not, but is a feeling that is expressed in a variety of ways and degrees. Höijer (2004) also found that women react more often with compassion than men, and elderly people much more than younger people. Also Tester (2001), using the study of Dyck and Coldevin (1992), analyzes the fundamentally gender-focused meanings of compassion, and he found out that while women need arguments about emotional attachments, like a picture of an African child crying, the men need much more rational arguments to donate or help the sufferer.

According to Höijer (2004), there are four different forms of compassion: tender-hearted compassion, blame-filled compassion, shame-filled compassion and powerlessness-filled compassion. Tender-hearted compassion emphasizes the suffering of the victims and the viewer, who engages with the sufferer, and it has a response of pity and empathy. This first form of compassion is linked to our research since telethon viewers engage with the sufferer in a particular way, enabling them to feel pity or empathy. Blame-filled compassion focuses on the suffering of the victims in combination with indignation and anger. Basically, the viewer becomes angry and feels indignation because someone has caused so much suffering. The third form of compassion is shame-filled compassion, which brings a connection with witnessing the suffering of others in the viewer's own pleased lives. In this situation, the viewer of the images displaying suffering feels shame, which is accompanied as well with sentiments of anger and denunciation, since he considers himself as being passive and not engaging with the victims. In this case, the audience would not participate or donate in telethons. Finally, powerlessness-filled compassion is when the viewer is aware that the media spectator cannot change the situation, and so they are limited and aware that they are not

able to alleviate the suffering of the victims. This last form of compassion brings both a sentiment of impotence and powerlessness.

Finally, Höijer (2004) concludes that although there are four different forms of compassion, they can be represented simultaneously in the same person. Thus, a certain viewer can experience two or three forms of compassion at the same time, for example, one can feel tender-hearted compassion while also blaming a perpetrator and experiencing powerlessness. Following this idea, Ong (2009) explains that people develop an identity in particular contexts and express themselves in different ways, including the expression of compassion. People differ in how they react when engaging with the other, so not everyone feels and demonstrates their compassion in the same ways.

Jean Baudrillard (1983) is considered to be a skeptical post-modernist because he argues that mediation produces simulacra of images without reality (Ong, 2009, p.461). Ignatieff (1998) is more optimistic with the role of the media suiting to a communitarian conscience. However, at the same time, he notices that familiar practices of representation can also disable this conscience and create 'compassion fatigue'.

2.3.4 Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue is the idea that "audiences become passive and desensitized to the repetitive shuffle of suffering and disaster, they expose that individuals have a wide and complex range of emotional responses when confronted with appeals to 'do something' about human rights atrocities" (Ong, 2008, p.3).

Some scholars such as Moeller (1999), Tester (2001), Sontag (2004), Höijer (2004), Silverstone (2007) and Cottle (2008) have analyzed compassion fatigue using different perspectives. Devereux's (1996) analysis of telethons concludes that there has been a decrease in charity donations from the audience, which he calls charity fatigue. But this concept is mostly referred to as compassion fatigue, which means that people start to become numb to images of suffering due to incessant media exposure. In turn, they begin to believe that nothing can be done to help all the suffering that exists in the world. Finkelkraut (1998) mentions "the more suffering that people see on their TV screens, the less concerned they feel. Current events demobilize them; images kill the feeling of obligation within them" (as cited in Tester, 2001, p.5).

Moeller (1999) defines compassion fatigue as a type of exhaustion towards a media problem, "too much harping on the same set of images, too much strident coverage with insufficient background and context, exhaust the public" (p.25). This author relates the concept of compassion fatigue with journalistic practice. In the same way, Sontag (2004) wonders whether or not the photograph, in the context of today's media, can even have such an impact when she analyzes the images of American

soldiers in the Iraq war. She explains: “so now the pictures will continue to ‘assault’ us – as many Americans are bound to feel. Will people get used to them? Some Americans are already saying they have seen enough” (p.6).

Compassion fatigue may occur when we understand compassion as the addressing of others suffering in the public sphere (Tester, 2001). Tester concludes that “compassion fatigue is about public compassion” (p.19). However, compassion fatigue depends on the kind of the medium. Bourdieu (1998) identifies a conflict between newspapers offering more sensational news and newspapers characterized by analysis and commentary. The latter distinguishes itself with the former by its values of “objectivity” (p.70). Tester (2001) explains that the journalist is divided between objectivity and human attachment. He concludes that “compassion fatigue emerges as an issue when objective journalistic practice is challenged by the demands of the sensational and reduced to the ‘quick fix’ of human interest” (Tester, 2001, p.27).

Consequently, there is a crisis of duty, more accurately “a double crisis: which involves responsibility for the media and responsibility for the world that the media represent” (Silverstone, 2007, p.133). This responsibility of the citizens has to do with morality and therefore, the principals that people have. According to some scholars (Moeller, 1999; Devereux, 1996), people have lost some of the responsibility that they had before and they are no longer involved in the suffering of others. Tester (2001) defines this as a kind of “fatalism” (p.13). On the other hand, the responsibility of the media to represent reality accurately and to send the right amount of information and images displaying suffering is also a consequence of the crisis of duty that Silverstone (2007) explains. However, this concept of compassion fatigue is still controversial within media studies and has generated criticism.

Cottle (2003) explains the difficulty in sending the right amount of suffering contents to audiences. This issue is one of the most significant debates recently. Tester (2001) asked him if journalists are the ones responsible for the sense of fatalism that seems to be so widespread. Showing too much can result in compassion fatigue, and audiences will become alienated or desensitized over time. Showing too little can belittle the seriousness of a suffering situation, resulting in public disinterest (Cottle, 2003). Alagiah (1998) concluded that the problem and the cause of compassion fatigue is the fact that there is no identification between the journalists who interview and the victims, thus he stresses the ethics of journalistic practice (as cited in Tester, 2001). In media, there is a lot of competition, and as a result, much of the media use the same text, images and graphics and therefore, they send similar content to the audience. When this happen compassion fatigue can emerge since it is a consequence of a repetitious “journalism and looking-over-shoulder reporting” (Moeller, 1999, p.32).

2.3.5 Imagined Communities and Solidarity: What Makes Us Human Beings

Solidarity is a concept that has been studied from many different perspectives for many years. Extending Anderson's (1989) argument on the role of media in the naturalization of national belonging through the construction of national "imagined communities", Appadurai (1996) has claimed that through their global distribution and their collective reading, media forms become part of a global collective imagery. Thus, "solidarities are formed and communities are imagined beyond the framework of the national society, around experience of taste, pleasure or politics" (Kyriakidou, 2008); they are based on "communities of sentiment" (Appadurai, 1996, p.8). However, exposure of images displaying suffering does not guarantee emotional engagement from the perspective of the audience. Empathy and compassion cannot be automatic responses to media consumption (Kyriakidou, 2008) because it depends on the situation. Finally, Ibrahim (2010) explains that the bias of the visual in the media plays an important role in constructing our postmodern subjectivities, which are defined through:

our interpretations and [...] our engagements and disengagements with the imagined communities the media represents, reflecting both the media's symbolic power to represent and narrate reality and equally the audience's agency to partake in grief and to personalize or gain proximity or distance to events of suffering (p.124).

To be voluntary means to not look for the exchange and the personal benefit, but to have altruist motives. Altruism is "the ability to find or do something without receiving anything in return" (Cabezas, 2004, p.179). Cabezas describes volunteering as an "alternative community involvement, by a freely taken action and for free, with a socially useful purpose; to give a collective response to the culture of the lack of solidarity" (Cabezas, 2004, p.179).

Social interaction is a required prerequisite for Durkheim's concept of solidarity, what refers to social relationships between citizens. Moreover, Durkheim observed "an inverted relation between the degree of solidarity and the degree of openness towards foreigners" (Stjerno, 2005, p.35). To be open towards other people means to try to understand them and helping them in a certain way, which spectators of a telethon may do. This understanding of others and imagining their situation in our own situation could be the emergence of an imagined community between different kinds of people.

In a crisis situation, people can adopt two different positions: fatalistic vision and nonconformist vision (Cabezas, 2004). The fatalistic vision is characterized by feelings of "I cannot do something". This conceptualization underlies the 'utopia crisis', or the thinking that a problem has no possible solution. The nonconformist vision is characterized by criticizing that does not accept the status quo

and wants to achieve a better, fairer world. Thus, the volunteering, as a social phenomenon has its roots in the nonconformist vision.

2.3.6 Forms of Solidarity

Cabezas (2004) describes solidarity as the “adherence or support to the cause of another or others” (p.177) and identifies three elements that compose solidarity: compassion, recognition, and universalization. Compassion emerges when the feelings of solidarity enable us to live others’ worlds as our own world. Recognition is an attitude, which means that to be a person of solidarity one must not only to suffer with the other, but also recognize the sufferer as a person with potentialities and origin. Lastly, universalization is the feeling and attitude of embracing all men. Hechter (1988) points out that “in all societies individuals’ actions are decisively affected by the groups to which they belong” (p.15). This means that groups influence their members’ behaviors. Cabezas (2004) argues we are living in the era of solidarity, and he outlines four models: solidarity as a spectacle, solidarity as a campaign, solidarity as cooperation, and solidarity as encounter.

The first model, solidarity as a spectacle, demonstrates that solidarity becomes a commodity to be bought and sold; the voluntary organizations sell solidarity and the citizens buy solidarity. Thus, in this case, solidarity is found among people not for the values that solidarity has, but for the values that produce the exchange to be supportive (social prestige, status and emotional reward). This form of solidarity gives pleasure and therefore it could be linked to telethons, as the spectators and participants of a telethon feel good by helping other people. Secondly, the solidarity as a campaign model is when solidarity is an immediate response of a tragic situation of maximum urgency. This is an emotional reward, of being at peace with oneself. One example would be a Haiti campaign where people have an immediate response to the specific tragic situation of a massive earthquake.

Thirdly, the solidarity as a cooperation model outlines that the development of solidarity projects is the goal, and not the interest of the media. The projects are monitored: the correct use of subsidies, the economic justification of them and others. The solidarity aspect here relates to the consensus. Those affected, the sufferers, are excluded. An example of this would be a telethon that seeks donations for future scientific research, as the case study of this research. And the last model, the solidarity as an encounter model, is an alternative of the three models above. It means an encounter with the world of suffering, injustice, in which no one can remain indifferent. It is a new way of thinking and living. This model has the capacity to think, to analyze seriously and rigorously the reality that has a lack of solidarity and injustice. This kind of solidarity goes far beyond the immediate response of people due to shocking images. One common aspect between the four solidarity models is that they need the audience’s attention and participation to exist.

2.3.7 Audience Participation

The participation of the public in mass media has been studied by Silverstone (2007) and Chouliaraki (2008a) at the level of live broadcasting, notably in radio and television programs. In a charity context, the audience is an important element that links different aspects such as the media and the sufferers. Silverstone (2007) points out that “media images enable a collusive illusion that the appearance of the other in crisis on the screen is sufficient for us to believe that we are fully engaged with him or her in that crisis” (p.131). This responsibility means that the audience is expected to participate or to donate in order to help the sufferer and improve their life conditions.

The participation of the audience is the main goal of telethons. However, the audience members are not the only ones with responsibility. The media and the represented subjects in the media also carry the burden (Silverstone, 2007). Chouliaraki (2008a) observed audiences by analyzing the connection between the media representation and the public action in a context where mediation is considered to be a moral education. Mediation “creates the world in meanings”, so media texts are exhibitions of “moral value” that propose different possibilities of action to the spectator (p.837). Chouliaraki (2008a) considers the spectator as an actor who acts depending on the relationship between the spectator and the sufferer that is reproduced by media texts. For example, if the spectator identifies himself/herself with the sufferer, sometimes the reaction is to act, to participate or donate in that humanitarian project. As she points out “we can therefore consider contemporary mediation as part of, what Aristotle calls, our ‘moral education as citizens of the world’” (2008a, p.838). Mediation as a moral education depends on the performative capacity of representation, which refers to the capacity that the media have not only to represent the world to their audiences, but also to propose to them how to feel and think about the world. The television program that normally uses this performative capacity of representation to achieve a certain reaction of the audience is the telethon.

2.4 The Telethon

2.4.1 The Television Marathon

A telethon is “a particular television genre that provokes public agency in the form of charity donations [...] and it involves the mediation of philanthropic agency, which, in turn, depends on another form of technological mediation – the transfer of money” (Chouliaraki, 2006b, p.205).

The word ‘telethon’ can be divided in two parts: ‘tele’ which means restricted to the television medium, and ‘thon’ which comes from the word ‘marathon,’ and indicates that the broadcasting occurs for a long period of time and requires preparation (Tester, 2001). Therefore, the telethon is “an hybrid form of programme” (Devereux, 1996, p.47), the purpose of which is to raise funds for a charitable cause, such as disease, famine, war, death, unemployment, (natural) disasters, or for local

or national purposes (Chouliaraki, 2006b). These charity's programs last several hours and are composed by different pledges' solicitations and a variety of entertainment spectacles (Devereux, 1996). The audience is urged to participate or donate money to humanitarian organizations, what is normally the principal goal of telethons. Telethons exist to help humanity and they "always side with the victims and they appeal to our most notable feelings – compassion and altruism" (Höijer, 2004, p.518). Tester (2001) concludes that telethons demand two kinds of audience investment: time and money (p.116).

These charity television programs turn the sufferer into a commodity in order to capture both the attention and the participation of the viewer (Smit, 2003). The requisite feature of a telethon is the representation of the suffering of others, which may be geographically or psychologically distant from the viewer, by using different images, video, sound, reportages and direct interviews. By doing this, the media are creating a compassionate feeling, which is the reaction occasioned by the awareness of other persons' suffering (Chouliaraki, 2006a & Nussbaum, 2001). As Alagiah (1999) points out, there is a 'casual connection' between the journalists' ability to report suffering and the domestication, and the action that is taken by the audience as a reaction to those in suffering (as cited in Tester, 2001).

A telethon involves the suspension of normal television programming because of their long duration (Devereux, 1996). In addition, it has a significant amount of audience participation, which will be the focus of this study, in terms of both the audience as fund-raisers and as participants (Devereux, 1996). These are two differences between telethons and other kind of television broadcasts (Devereux 1996). The audience involvement and participation are what telethons need in order to be successful; people can engage by donating money and also by participating in benefit activities such as concerts, sport games, and parties in which all the benefits are for the telethon's project. During the telethon broadcast, there is a "great emphasis on the activities of individuals, groups and communities who have raised money for 'good causes'" (Devereux, 1996, p.48).

The telethon is an American invention (Tester, 2001), and the Jerry Lewis Telethon in the United States was one of the first telethons worldwide (Devereux, 1996). The Jerry Lewis telethon has been produced since 1966 and it raises millions of dollars for research and services. The purpose of this telethon, which is broadcast annually every Labor Day (Devereux, 1996), is to change the lives of individuals living with the thirty-five different neuromuscular diseases covered by MDA's services (Smit, 2003).

Although raising large amounts of money was the main motivation for the first telethon and remained the prime motivation for each of its successors (Ellwood & Spitzer, 1979), some telethons

focus on awareness. A telethon has an important role in raising audience awareness of issues as well as in encouraging citizens to participate by watching the program or organizing benefit activities in that particular media event. Telethons offer the opportunity to gain a greater insight into the world of the sufferer through the use of filmed segments and interviews. It also informs the public about interesting social issues, such as diseases, famine, unemployment, or (natural) disasters. Thus, the awareness-raising is sometimes just as important as the money raised in some telethons. It may be the case that one telethon gains popularity because people like to obtain knowledge about the issue that the telethon is covering.

To understand the popularity and the undoubted success of some telethons, it is necessary to explain other aspects. The successful genre of telethons depends on how suffering is represented. Contrary to news or documentary reports, which explain and represent the suffering from an objective and serious way, "in telethons television, the images we see of poverty and need are sanitized and relatively invisible in the wider context of a programme which emphasizes entertainment and fund-raising" (Tester, 2001, p.117). Therefore, in telethons there are two aspects: the serious form of broadcasting and the entertainment feature. Moreover, Tester (2001) continues explaining that in telethons there is much more emphasis and importance on the spectator than on the sufferer. This means that telethons focus on the participation that the viewers are doing more than just what the testimonials explain during the television program. For example, in some telethons there are massive amounts of images that people have accumulated to raise more money for the cause.

While some humanitarian organizations fight against poverty or incurable diseases, others aim to improve the life of people affected by (natural) disasters (Devereux, 1996). However, telethons have been sharply criticized "for subordinating the moral cause of suffering to not only television entertainment but also to the bank cheque" (Chouliaraki, 2006b, p.205) and "for demeaning the lives of those living in what is termed the disabled culture" (Smit, 2003, p.1). Smit (2003) analyses the MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) Jerry's Kids telethon and its critique, and he explains "disabled advocates [...] have claimed that such identification infantilized the disabled public, and made them appear intrinsically dependent on able-bodied society" (p.1). However, MDA is a particular telethon and therefore it is not possible to generalize findings to all telethons. Therefore telethons in general and their main characteristics are then explained.

2.4.2 The Three Main Telethon Characteristics

Most telethons follow a similar format. Tester (2001) identifies three characteristics of telethons that generate investment. The first one is the fact that telethons send the message of 'something can be done' to reduce suffering and misery, thus they sell the idea that people like all of us can change a

situation and make a difference in the world. The presenters of telethons use messages such as “Keep sending us the donations! We need your money now! The 2m must be reached!” and “We know you’re going to be very kind and very generous and as decent as you possibly can tonight” (Devereux, 1996, p.58). This gives much more attention to the action of the audience than to the sufferer, as explained.

Secondly, telethons use celebrities to generate public attention. Robert K. Merton once commented on Kate Smith, one of the most successful celebrities in the campaign of the Second World War: “For many, she has become the symbol of a moral leader who ‘demonstrates’ by her own behavior that there need to be no discrepancy between appearance and reality in the sphere of human relationship” (Merton, 1949, as cited in Tester, 2001, p.120). This participation and involvement of well-known celebrities, generally from the world of entertainment, is important because it helps to get more public attention (Littler, 2008). As a consequence, more people watch the program and there is more participation and more donations from the audience. Thus, celebrities stimulate to the success of telethons. However, there has been considerable debate concerning the role of celebrities in charity organizations. Some scholars consider the celebrity role in a charity context as positive, while others view it as a distraction and hindrance to a charity’s goals. This issue will be discussed in more detail later on.

Finally, the fact that telethons encourage people to invest because they will “connect the other directed character with a community of seemingly similar individuals” (Tester, 2001, p.120). Thus, in this sense, the whole nation is one unit and connected, and it forms a group with the same achievement in mind where everyone can engage. “Differences of region, economy, or accent are subordinated to the inclusiveness of a national community which is able evidently to be compassionate when given the opportunity” (Tester, 2001, p.120). As Tester (2001) interpreted, telethons are a genre that translates the moral values of the audience into action. This audience can be different, can have different opinions, and can pay different amounts of attention to different telethons, however the telethon uses a kind of format that is “focused enough and yet flexible enough” (p.121) to engage with all kinds of audiences.

2.4.3 The Telethon Format

Most telethons have similar features and follow the same structure, contents and style; however there are some important differences between various types of telethons which may explain why some telethons are more successful than others. In this section, the structure, contents, and style of telethons are discussed.

Devereux (1996) analyzes the telethon *People in Need 1992*. In terms of the structure of the program itself, he found three distinct parts: first, a major part of the program was based in the main RTE (Radio Telefis Eireann) television studio; second, the program had a series of links with other celebrities at various locations throughout the country explaining the benefit activities citizens were doing; and third, the program featured a number of filmed segments, reportages of people who were in need of charity. Most of the reportages were repeated twice during the telethon. This combination of different film segments is the reason why Devereux (1996) concludes that a telethon is “intertextual in form and as such represents a type of hybrid television” (p.57). As it can be considered, this kind of television program requires considerable preparation since it has a long duration and it involves the participation of many celebrities, citizens and sponsor companies.

The telethon takes on a repetitious form. As Smit (2003) finds with the *Jerry Lewis MDA* telethon, the format of the telethon quickly becomes recognizable to the home viewer. Furthermore, viewers of telethons are constantly shown phone numbers and websites by which they can send their pledges or participate in benefit activities. Another repetitious aspect is the catch sentences that telethons pronounce. The presenter has a set of simple messages for their audiences such as: “please send your donation now”, “these people need your help”, “you can make a difference” (Smit, 2003, p.3); and “we want to see more money! Send us your money now!” (Devereux, 1996, p.58). This exposure to catch-phrases is a necessary feature in telethons since people need to believe their contribution is important. However, Smit (2003) points out that “this constant bombardment of images and phrases completely saturates the home viewer with reasons to make a pledge” (p.3), which potentially generates the emergence of compassion fatigue.

Another aspect to consider in this section is the visual construction. By using specific camera techniques, the producers of a telethon approach a particular way of filming the sufferers, dwelling in particular on their use of images and symbolism to convey messages about them. For example, they accentuate the disabled body of the sufferer who is living in a wheelchair by using a low perspective view, or they use primarily full-body shots to provide a more complete image of “disability” (Smit, 2003, p.3). Tester (2001) relates this concept stating that at the moment others are represented by television they lose their “embodied presence and in so doing they lose their moral integrity” (p.5). Thus, they become something different than a proper and normal human body.

This is related to the fragmentation concept that Hall (1997) mentions, although he explains that as a technique used in pornography. Hall (1997) points out that victims are not shown as a person, as an entire person, however they are “disassembled into [their] relevant parts” (1997, p.266). Thus, victims are “fetishized” as Hall explains, since they turn into an object instead of a subject. “This

substitution of a part for the whole, of a thing – an object, an organ, a portion of the body – for a subject, is the effect of a very important representational practice – fetishism” (Hall, 1997, p.266). Chouliaraki (2008c) refers to this as well by questioning the ways in which famine and human suffering are portrayed in Western media. Those images in the news have the power of the visibility of suffering, which can produce a shocking effect. This makes people care and raise money for the cause. Finally, Bauman explains that in the television, the strangers become objects of diversion. Bauman asks himself if the representations of suffering are able to be entertaining even on their own limited terms (as cited in Tester, 2001, p.7).

This usage of the conscious staging of physical abnormality helps to capture the audience’s attention in order to make money (Smit, 2003, p.3). But the media capture the audience’s attention and get participation not only by showing physical abnormality, but also by showing close-up images of children, in which the spectators are able to see their, usually sad, eyes. As the executive producer of the *People in Need* puts it, the main object of a telethon is “to entertain, but to raise money at the same time” (Devereux, 1996, p.52). For this reason it is important to stir feelings of compassion or pity by showing audiences created images of suffering.

The producers of telethons sometimes use potent symbols or incorporate elements of drama (Devereux, 1996), for example classical music, and specific focus and position of the camera to accentuate a certain aspect. Moreover, the moment that the filmed sufferer speaks for themselves and explain their personal experience is important since the viewers can understand much better the discourse of a person who is suffering than of a professional specialized in that disease. The reportages are of interest in that they show examples of activities not normally seen on television which attracts audience’s attention. Autobiographical texts, which are personal discourses from the testimonials, offer an ‘inside look’ at why and how the sufferer feels. By personifying the sufferer, the autobiographical texts worked to create a “human connection between the spectacle and the spectator” (Smit, 2003, p.4).

Thompson (1997) explains the importance of the narratives from scientific experts often seen in telethons. The scientific interventions during a telethon ensure the public that what they are watching is real. Furthermore, telethons show some victories of science as potentially helpful in the improvement of patient life, and this is a way to inform the public of what their money, over the years, has accomplished. This helps to convince the public that their donations will have a great impact.

The patient profile is another important aspect in telethons (Smit, 2003). Telethons use sensational narratives and visual techniques to amplify the human need seen in the actual lives of their clients.

“The patient profile [...] is saturated with spectacle. It is, perhaps, the most sensational element of the telethon event” (Smit, 2003, p.9). However, the patient profile is not the only full with spectacle in a telethon; the telethon host is playing also an important role. Most telethons are conducted by one or more presenters, which are usually star-figures that work throughout the event to lure viewers into watching the program (Smit, 2003). Therefore, the role of those star-figures is then explained.

2.4.4 The Role of Celebrities

As explained before, charity organizations use celebrities to capture the audience’s attention (Thrall, et al., 2008). Thrall et al. (2008) consider the existing connection of a celebrity between fame, charity, and news coverage as a positive one. Charity projects are good for celebrities, because they get more coverage and so, more fame. Celebrities are also good for foundations since it is a way to get public attention and participation. West and Orman (2003) agree when they state, “it is likely that issues such as violence against women, handgun regulation and hunger would not have attracted as much press as they have without the assistance of prominent Hollywood entertainers” (as cited in Thrall et al., 2008, p.74).

Although celebrities play an important role in charity organizations, there are some authors such as Littler (2008) and Goggin & Newell (2004) that emphasize negative aspects of this relationship. “The inequality of financial benefit” (Littler, 2008) means that sometimes the celebrity earns more money than the amount that the charity is collecting. Moreover, the celebrity gets a lot of power and influence on agenda setting, which can result in conflicts of interest. Littler (2008) sees celebrities doing charity as a simple business model. Being engaged with a charity organization is part of a celebrity’s job. “The star finds a charity to gain favorable publicity” (Goggin & Newell, 2004). For almost all celebrities and companies that promote a charity organization, it is basically just a form to promote themselves and to achieve more popularity.

Finally, celebrities sell, and instead of selling watches and cars they “sell” humanitarian messages. Therefore, celebrity helps to get people involved in charity and, as a consequence, to accumulate more money for humanitarian issues. However, the reality is that they do not change the suffering situation. Littler (2008) points out that “celebrity charity can become part of the problem rather than the solution” (p.243) because whereas charity causes are most of the time about crushing or relieving poverty, celebrities are the representation of personalized wealth. This is a problematic relationship caused by this contradiction.

In this context, in spite of the criticism of Littler (2008) and Goggin and Newell (2004), it is clear that celebrities help to attract audiences in a television program and therefore, they contribute to increase the number of participants and donations. However, this is not the only way to gain attention. It is also important to promote the cause well by creating a sensitive campaign that will effect audiences in a certain way and provoke a reaction.

2.4.5 The Advertising of Telethons

As a result of competition between charity organizations, some telethons are spending significant amounts of money on marketing. The advertising of telethons is an important factor that should motivate the audiences to watch the program, to participate, or to donate to the humanitarian project at hand. What persuades people to participate or to give to charity? How should an advertisement involve people in a telethon?

Charity advertisements try to stimulate sympathy or compassion for their cause. To this end, victims are pictured in a way to draw out the responses that are believed to generate pro-social behavior. Pictures stimulate emotion; however, depending on the nature of the picture the emotional response can be different (Small & Verrochi, 2009). Certain pictures, such as pictures of children or shocking images, may incite more compassion for the victim than others. There are two distinct kinds of public service ads: one type is aimed at individuals in need of help or persons who are vulnerable to health or other problems, and the other is aimed at getting the public to help others, typically by donating their time or money to a worthy cause (Bagozzi & Moore, 1994, p.56).

Small and Verrochi (2009) studied how emotional facial expressions displayed on charity advertisements are a crucial determinant of sympathy and giving. Emotional expressions, such as a telethon witness frowning, may be an important variable affecting donations in charity organizations. There is a great deal of evidence that fostering sympathy increases people's tendency to give to charity. For this reason it is essential to choose the best image for the advertisement of telethons. Normally, the advertisements are prior to the telethon. They are broadcast on television months before the telethon. The advertisements can be considered as the mechanism that causes people's solidarity spirit to activate. Thus, the published advertisements prior to the telethon are what make the audience aware of and motivated to see the telethon.

Regarding the diverse images represented in the advertisement of a telethon, it is important that the audience identifies themselves with the victim shown in such images. Specific identifiable victims stimulate greater sympathy and greater generosity than abstract victims (Small & Loewenstein, 2003). This idea is linked to the ideal victims explained previously. This compassion can be achieved

by showing sad facial expressions; contrary to Dyck and Coldevin (1992), Small and Loewenstein (2003) found out that people feel sadder when exposed to a sad-faced image. They argue that this “transfer of emotion is automatic and not driven by inferential thinking” (p.785). They proposed that the shared experience of sadness emotionally equips observers to empathize with suffering. Thus, a sad expression increases giving compared with a neutral or happy expression. For example, Bagozzi and Moore (1994) hypothesize that public service ads designed to reduce the incidence of child abuse stimulate negative emotions. These, in turn, lead to empathic reactions and end with the decision to help.

Finally, the main goal of the advertisement prior and during telethons is to stimulate certain reactions and behaviors of the audience. It is in the interests of advertisers to create one ‘preferred’ reading of the advertisement’s message. Thus, the manipulation and organization of texts and images, the visual, technical, and linguistic strategies should work together to secure one preferred reading of an advertisement to the exclusion of others. However, although advertisers look for a preferred reading of their image, people react differently in front of diverse images displaying suffering, as explained before.

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The following section presents an overview of the different methods that have been used to analyze the success of the case study: *La Marató de TV3*, the largest fundraising telethon in Spain, the most recent edition of which raised €8,735,103 in 2010. As explained in the introduction, there are a variety of aspects related to the telethon that are analyzed in this study, such as (1) the production of the telethon with references to the content, (2) the audience's opinion and feelings and (3) the context of this particular telethon based on different documents.

The explanations and opinions of the telethon's producers were collected by expert interviews; the audience's opinion was analyzed by using an online survey; and the context of this study was addressed by doing a document analysis. Studying something in multiple ways within a single study is commonly known as triangulation (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). In social-scientific research, according to Denzin (1978), there are at least four types of triangulation: methodological triangulation, data triangulation, researcher triangulation and theoretical triangulation. This research study is using a methodological triangulation because it involves "the use of and comparisons made among multiple methods to study the same phenomenon" (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p.85), so the findings of the study may be cross-checked (Bryman, 2008). Bryman (2008) explains that the use of more than one method would be used to develop the measures, resulting in greater confidence in the findings. By combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, the research uses multiple ways of measuring the concepts. This allows for the results to be cross-checked. The main goal of the methodological strategy of triangulation is to strengthen the validity of the findings through congruence i.e. similarity, consistency or convergence of results, and also by demonstrating complementary results from each method (Greene & McClintock, 1985).

In order to collect the relevant data, three methods of data collection were performed. Firstly, expert interviews were applied to some of the professionals who produce or organize the Catalan telethon and also a philosopher in order to get an in-depth analysis of the compassion concept. Secondly, an online survey was applied to collect data regarding the reactions, opinions and responses of the audience to the Catalan telethon. In addition to the interviews and the online survey, a document analysis was conducted to applied a comparative design to study the audience curve, the number of donations in each hour of the 16-hour program, and the script of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*.

Three of the most pronounced criteria for the evaluation of social research are reliability, replication and validity (Bryman, 2008). These three elements are discussed in each method; however, an explanation of these terms is helpful. Reliability is determined by checking whether the results of a study are repeatable meaning that the measurement is consistent; replication means that the study

should lead to the same results when another researcher applies the same methodology to the same data; and validity “is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman, 2008, p.32). There are two types of validity: internal, which concerns the accuracy of the conclusions, and external, which concerns the generalization of the findings from a research study (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). “Evaluating the validity of a study is based on whether appropriate and accurate procedures were used to conduct the research study” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p.109).

In this sense, detailed descriptions of each of the steps are provided to achieve the results using different methods. By doing so, the way of collecting data is more systematic and able to be verified. The research study can also be replicated, which means that other researchers should be able to repeat the same process that was done and obtain the same results that were achieved, meaning this study would have reliability. Of course, the interviews would change with another interviewer, so the data would be different, but the results should still be similar. The researcher contributes to the data since all researchers have a role in their studies. However, this analysis has validity because the results are generalized by the methods that were applied. It is also transparent and objective, two main features that academic research should have (Bryman, 2008).

3.1 In-depth Interviews

The first method of research conducted was in-depth interviews. Interviewing is one of the most used data collection methods in media and communication research (Jensen, 2002). This is one of the reasons why it has been drawn on interview data sources to collect information about telethons. Asking people face-to-face is a good way to find out what they think and feel about something. As Blumer explains, interviewing is an immediate exploration of the empirical world (Blumer, 1969 as cited in Bryman, 2008). This was the main point of this part of the research: to get to know what the producers of the telethon *La Marató de TV3* think about their charity television program and other aspects such as producing content about suffering, compassion, their main goals and the audience’s responses.

There are different ways of analyzing interviews. Semi-structured interviews are usually regarded as a “means of collecting qualitative data” (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Qualitative measurements find symbols that indicate meaning people have assigned to something (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). The data gathered is in the words of the interviewee and, as such is ‘raw’ data (Matthews & Ross, 2010). It is common to record and keep data in this form in the initial stages of the analysis so that the analysis is of the expert’s own words and not the researcher’s words. The gathered data is then analyzed with regard to the research questions.

An interview facilitates direct communication between two people. Therefore, by using interviews as a method, it is possible to investigate expressions, feelings and opinions from the interviewee (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Other positive aspects of semi-structured interviews are that they allow each interview to be made appropriate for each respondent whilst always following the general topic list which has been used for each interview. In addition, the data gathered from interviews features the words of the participant and is therefore 'raw' data; the researcher is in direct contact with the participant and the interviews can be combined with other data collection methods such as the interviewer's observations and experiences of the interview (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The difficulty however, is that sometimes people do not always say what they think, or mean what they say (Jensen, 2002); also interviews, in comparison with surveys, (1) require more money (in case it is necessary to travel, as it was in our interviews) and time to gather data, (2) have less privacy and less anonymity, making it more difficult to gather valid data about personal, risky or embarrassing topics, and (3) have a large amount of 'raw' data and can subtly bias responses e.g. depending on the relation between interviewer and interviewee (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000; Matthews & Ross, 2010).

This research is designed to investigate why *La Marató de TV3* is the Spanish telethon that manages to achieve more donations and participation from the Spanish population than any other. To achieve this, it was necessary to interview the producers and some important people involved in that particular Catalan telethon. An email was sent to the television channel, TV3, asking for some information about *La Marató de TV3* to write a Master's thesis at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. Fortunately, they replied and offered their help; they were particularly interested in this thesis and the research focus as there has never been any academic study on this telethon until now.

After some email communication, they arranged four interviews for this thesis in April 2011 with the following people: Carme Basté – director of *La Marató de TV3* Foundation, Xavier Abad – director of *La Marató de TV3* 2010, and Carles Checa and Camil Roca – the creative directors of marketing at TV3 and therefore also at *La Marató de TV3* (unfortunately Camil Roca had to cancel the interview for personal reasons). In addition, another interview was arranged with Joan-Carles Mèlich, a philosophy teacher at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, who has written a book about compassion called *Ética de la compasión*. These participants were chosen because of their "experience or opinions on the research topic [...] and they will allow to the researcher to study the research topic in depth" (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p.225). A first contact with each interviewee before the interview was done by email because it is important that interviewers "get in touch with respondents in order to enlist cooperation" (Fowler, 2009, p.127). Table 1 below described the most relevant information of each interview.

Table 1: Details of the experts interviewees.

	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
Name	Carme Basté	Xavier Abad	Carles Checa	Joan-Carles Mèlich
Gender	Woman	Man	Men	Men
Date	4 th April 2011	5 th April 2011	6 th April 2011	6 th April 2011
Duration	49:21	66:54	38:18	88:49
Location	Barcelona (Spain)	Barcelona (Spain)	Barcelona (Spain)	Barcelona (Spain)
Profession	Director of <i>La Marató de TV3's</i> Foundation	Director of <i>La Marató de TV3's</i> 2010 edition	The creative director of TV3's and <i>La Marató de TV3's</i> marketing	Doctor and university professor of philosophy and writer of the book <i>Ética de la compasión</i> .
Main Topics	<i>La Marató de TV3</i> , the program, the foundation, the audience, success project, sensitive campaign, compassion.	<i>La Marató de TV3</i> , the production, the audience, success project, sensitive campaign, the community sense, compassion.	Production of the sensitive campaign, the reasons why the success of <i>La Marató de TV3</i> , the reactions of the audience.	Compassion, pity, ethical behavior, morality, media, empathy, sympathy.
Contact	TV3	TV3	TV3	Maria Dalmases ⁴

All interviewees were very interesting for this research. An interview guide was used. It is a topic list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked in semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2008), created with approximately 20 questions for each interview, drawing on the main findings of the literature review. A general topic list in each interview was used although the researcher was able to adapt the interview for each respondent during the interview since semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to do so. Then, it was interesting to analyze the similarities and differences between interviewee's responses of the same topic list, thus giving consistency and reliability to the research.

⁴ Educator of Master and Post-graduates courses at the University Ramon Llull.

Each topic list was divided in five or six sections such as: the telethon, the production with references to the content, the audience, the contents, compassion and the sensitive campaign; and they can be found in the appendix section.

Some questions were asked that were on the topic list but also new ones that arose as the interviewee was explaining some new relevant aspects or interesting information. For this reason semi-structured interviews were chosen as an appropriate method. During the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was interested in both the content of the interview conversation and also the way the interviewee expressed themselves, this is known as an unstructured, qualitative and verbal method of data gathering. Bryman (2008) explains that the process is flexible because the emphasis is on how the interviewee frames and understands issues. It is a one-sided construction of meaning, meaning that it is constructed right there in that situation, and it is not possible to repeat an interview, this also has an effect on the validity of this study.

Secondly, the meetings with the interviewees were arranged and the interviews were performed whilst recording them (with permission). Immediately after the interviews some 'observations' were written in the thesis notebook, such as the interviewer's feelings about the atmosphere during the interview, since an observer "is able to emphatically become the central instrument of research" (Jensen, 2002, p.242). Once the interviews were finished and recorded, the transcription was performed. Then, the transcripts of each interview were sent to the interviewees to ask them if there was anything they would like to delete as confidential information. Finally, the analysis of the transcription starts with marking and coding each, based on the topic list, to highlight the most interesting findings and also some differences and similarities between the responses.

The above explanation of each of the steps proves that the way of collecting data is reliable and verifiable. Because of this, this research study can be replicated, so other researchers should be able to repeat the same process has been done and obtain the same or similar results that have been achieved.

To obtain results from the data, two qualitative interview analyses were used: discourse analysis and thematic analysis. Discourse analysis "emphasize the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse" (Bryman, 2008, p.500). In this sense, the interviews are creations of meaning from different points of view about the social aspects of the telethon event. And the second analysis (thematic analysis) is described as a "matrix based method for ordering and synthesizing data (Ritchie et al., 2003, as cited in Bryman, 2008, p.554). The idea is to construct an index of central themes and subthemes, such as the different sections of the topic lists, which are then represented in a matrix. In thematic analysis, the data is then displayed in terms

of subthemes within the matrix and for each interview. By using this qualitative content analysis, the similarities and differences between the interviewees can be observed. The transcripts of the four interviews can be found in the Appendix section.

In this study, interviews and surveys are used together. “Researchers using surveys and interviews employ many organizational, presentational, and questioning strategies” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p.100). However, we firstly conducted the interviews and applied those findings to construct the online survey (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). By doing this, we were able to test if the viewings of these four experts of *La Marató de TV3* matched with the audience’s opinions expressed in the online survey.

3.2 Survey

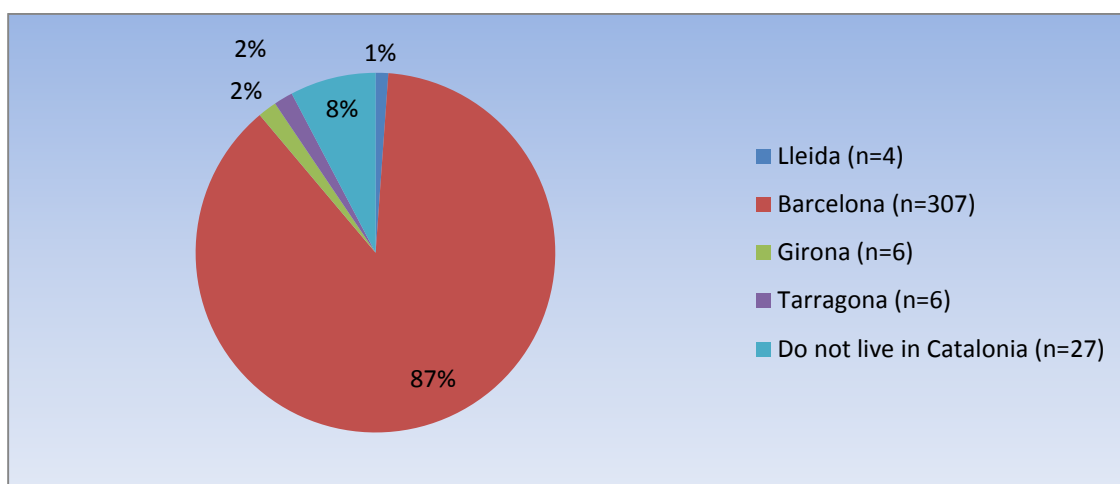
A survey is an attempt to gather information about a finite collection of objects (Turner & Martin, 1984). To study the case study we conducted an online questionnaire survey which is a self-report measurement technique which asks people to record their answers to questions that researchers have written. Contrary to Jensen (2002), Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000) consider that this measurement is probably the technique used most frequently in communication research. Bryman (2008) defines a questionnaire survey as “a collection of questions administered to respondents. When used on its own, the term usually denotes self-completion survey” (p.697). By creating and using the self-completion survey we wanted to collect the opinions, actions and feelings of the Catalan people (or people living in Catalonia) in relation to the telethon *La Marató de TV3*. Basically, we wanted to know the reason why people in Catalonia participate so much in this particular telethon, making the donation record in 2010, even during a time when a “compassion fatigue” is known to exist (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008), and there is a financial crisis in Spain. For example, the survey was performed to investigate if this high level of participation and donation is because of the images people saw during the telethon and the feelings these images provoke in them, or for other reasons that will be explained further in the results sections.

A survey, as any other method, has advantages and disadvantages to consider in this study. Following the ideas of Bryman (2008), the advantages of self-completion surveys, which is a list with questions, in comparison to interviews are: (1) cheaper to administer because of the time and cost of travel for the interviews, (2) quicker to administer as it can be distributed in very large quantities at the same time, (3) less social desirability biased because of the lack of presence of an interviewer, (4) no interviewer variability and (5) more convenience for respondents since they can complete the survey when they want and at the speed that they want to go. However, a possible disadvantage of online survey is that the sample is self-selected (Wright, 2005). The receivers were able to decide if they

wanted to participate. Other possible disadvantages are that (1) there is no one present to help respondents if they are having difficulty answering a question, (2) surveys cannot have many questions that are not salient to respondents, (3) there is difficulty of asking a lot of open questions, (4) they cannot collect additional data such as the observation of interviews, and (5) there is greater risk of missing data because of a lack of prompting or supervision (Bryman, 2008).

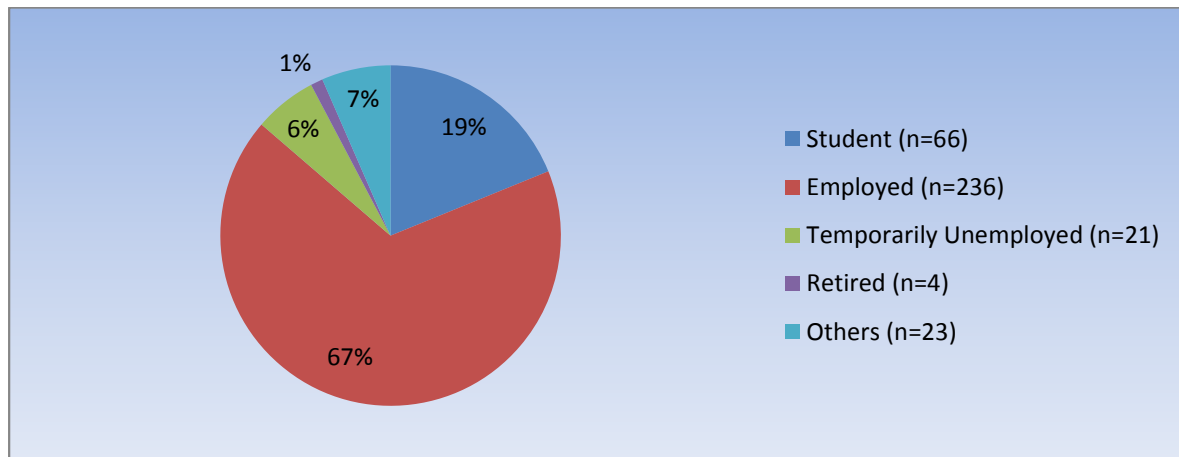
The target population is the Catalan population, without age restriction since everyone, children and old-people, can watch the telethon each with different socio-economic backgrounds, from different Catalonia provinces, different education and income, and including both the Catalan minorities and majorities. The reason why this focus is on people from Catalonia (people who live in Catalonia or people who were born there) is because the annual telethon *La Marató de TV3*, the main focus of the research study, is broadcast by TV3, which is the primary television channel of Catalan public broadcaster *Televisió de Catalunya* and it broadcasts programs only in Catalan (<http://www.tv3.cat/>). Furthermore, there was no discrimination against people who did not know about *La Marató de TV3*, since when they answered “no” they did not have to answer further questions about the actual telethon itself, rather they were only presented with general questions and were requested to watch some videos. 350 of 500 respondents completed the survey. There were more women than men; 57% (n=200) were women and 43% (n=150) men. There was also a variety of ages amongst those who answered the self-completion survey (n=350), but an abundant number of people were born between 1976 and 1980 (n=66), and between 1986 and 1990 (n=63). The next graphs represent the provinces and occupation of the survey’s respondents.

Graph 1: Geographical distribution of sample (N=350)⁵.



⁵ The demographic information questions were placed at the end of the questionnaire. Therefore, only the respondents who completed the questionnaire, which were 350, answered them.

Graph 2: Occupation of respondents (N=350).



Diversity among the respondents was a goal in order to achieve a representative respondent group, which would produce relevant results. In the last two graphs it can be observed that the majority of the respondents were from Barcelona (87%, n=307) and employed (67%, n=236). The concentration of people from Barcelona and those with jobs is not a reason to think that this study would be not as representative as it should be because it does not have an equal representation of every population category. It has to be considered that Barcelona is the most populated province of Catalonia and the majority of people in any society are either employed or student. For this reason, we believe that we have a representative sample, which is “a sample that reflects the population of a study accurately, so that it is a microcosm of the population” (Bryman, 2008, p.698). In order to be able to generalize these findings from the sample to the population from which it was selected, the population from Catalonia, the sample must be representative (Bryman, 2008).

The survey had 36 questions; 6 open questions and 30 closed questions. Open questions are more time-consuming for respondents to answer and for researchers to administer; and they also provide verbal data that is much more difficult to categorize than closed questions (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000). During the survey there were two videos to watch, one was *La Marató de TV3's* television advertisement which was published before the 2010 edition, and the other was the part of the 2010 telethon which was broadcast at 9 pm, and which was one of the moments in which the telethon achieved more donations and higher audience numbers. By showing these videos, people were able to answer some questions about how they felt, what they thought and if they would donate if they had watched these images and other aspects.

Most of the questions of the survey were derived from the expert interviews that were conducted previously as well as from the theoretical framework. Some ideas from authors such as Moeller (1999), Silverstone (2007), Tester (2001), Chouliaraki (2006a, 2006b, 2010), and Cottle (2008) were

used to classify the questions in different important aspects related to the case study. The survey had various answer options and scales provided for respondents; however, most of the questions were divided on yes/no questions, multiple choice questions with one option, multiple choice questions with multiple option, and open questions. The online survey finalized with social demographic questions such as age, gender, province of Catalonia, and occupation. Finally, there was an open question asking if respondents had any comment about the online survey. The survey and its answers can be found in the appendix section.

The survey was conducted online, using Qualtrics.com and it had a high response because Qualtrics.com spontaneously sent it to all our contacts and we asked them to forward it on to all their contacts. This method is commonly known as “snowball” and Bryman (2008) defines it as “a non-probability sample in which the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others” (p.699). The problem with snowball sampling is that it is very unlikely that the sample will be representative of the population (Becker, 1963); however it is a cheap way to achieve a high amount of responses quickly by using the Internet. Although snowball may generate non-representative samples, the different demographic features in terms of age, sex, and occupation match those of the larger Catalonia population. Therefore, the sample of the population from Catalonia can be considered to be representative for this study.

The survey was published on Friday the 15th of April, and in just three days 235 people had responded to the survey, most of them writing and explaining their thoughts and feelings in depth and giving their opinions about the survey in the final question. At that moment, the response rate was 100%, meaning that everyone who had accessed the survey on the website had completed it. Finally, after having the survey online for 3 weeks, we achieved 500 respondents of which 350 completed the survey, meaning that finally we had 70% of response rate. We considered this number of responses enough to have valid data.

To analyze all the data received from the surveys, quantitative analysis were used. Quantitative measurements “employ meaningful numerical indicators to ascertain the relative amount of something” (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 2000, p.83). The statistical software program SPSS was used to analyze the online survey data. Then, some data cleaning was done, which deals with finding and changing errors and inconsistencies from data in order to improve the quality of the data (Rahm & Do, 2000). Later, the values for each question were checked, so recoding variables, and it was also code the open question in different possible categories, so that those questions could also be analyzed with SPSS. Therefore, the results of the surveys are analyzed using statistical analysis in the

computer statistical program SPSS. Afterwards, the missing data was checked and decided if it was interesting to use some of the information provided by those respondents who did not complete the survey.

3.3 Document Analysis

In addition to the interviews and the online survey, we also conducted a document analysis on some additional information that TV3 supplied me with: the audience's curve, the number of donations by hour of the 16-hour program, and the script of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*. To have this relevant information on the Catalan telethon enabled me to analyze the script of the telethon (including images of the telethon which are posted on the website of *La Marató de TV3*) and then compared this against the moments in the program where there were high recordings of people watching the program and when the donations rose. By doing this, it was possible to see which images were the ones that got more audience responses and donations during the telethon. This document analysis is meant to contextualize the results from the other studies and it has applied a comparative design.

3.4 The Case Study: *La Marató de TV3*

La Marató de TV3 is an annual telethon that has existed since 1992, the purpose of which is to raise funds, by donations and benefit activities, for scientific research into diseases such as cancer, rare disease, Alzheimer, chronic pain and mental diseases that are currently incurable. Each year *La Marató* is devoted to one incurable illness and the benefits of the telethon are used to fund research projects. The funds are administered by *La Marató de TV3's* Foundation, created in 1996. However, this telethon is not just a television program, it is a humanitarian project driven by *Televisió de Catalunya* and *La Marató de TV3's* Foundation, which has an important sensitizing task to the Catalan society for the diseases that the program represents. Raising funds is not the only important task for *La Marató de TV3*, but also raising community awareness of scientific research and its importance and meaning for society and health, which could be one of the reasons for the success of this telethon.

La Marató de TV3 is broadcast by TV3, the primary television channel of Catalan public broadcaster *Televisió de Catalunya*. TV3 broadcasts programs only in Catalan, being the first television channel to do so, and it is a leader in audience numbers in Catalonia with its viewer share being between 14% and 16%. TV3 produces a number of series and TV movies each year. TV3 is considered by the people of Catalonia as the most politically impartial channel, the one that informs best and the one with the best family and sports programming, as the *Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya* (Catalonia's Audiovisual Council) 2006 report announces.

In 1992, TV3 was the first public television station in Spain to host a telethon. While this kind of television program (i.e. a telethon) has a long tradition in the USA and in other European countries, it represented a new challenge at the time, for Catalan television. The telethon is now broadcast every December and lasts approximately 15 hours. Every year, more than three million people watch the program and it raises around 7 million Euro each year. Regardless of the size of the donations gathered, the most important thing is that this telethon produces a big mobilization of citizens and it is regarded as Catalonia's greatest festival of community spirit and generosity. *La Marató de TV3* is the Spanish telethon that raises the most money for charity in Spain and it is regarded at the same level as other international telethons. In its 15 years, *La Marató de TV3* has grossed €64.733.170.

The program combines awareness, a scientific educational role, and entertainment, making it “a hybrid form of program” (Devereux, 1996, p.47). During the broadcast telethon the audience is informed about the telethon-sponsored diseases by being presented with personal accounts from individuals and their families, who are considered as ‘ordinary’ witnesses (Chouliaraki, 2010), and also from doctors and scientists associated with them. The use of ‘ordinary’ testimonials explaining their personal experience with the sickness is one of the aspects that creates a sense of community. People “connect the other directed character with a community of seemingly similar individuals” (Tester, 2001, p.120), and this group feeling that the telethon achieves consequently generates greater participation and donations. This issue is analyzed in the results section.

While maintaining its spirit of scientific and ethical rigor, *La Marató de TV3* also aims to provide quality entertainment. Participants include celebrities from the world of music, theatre, film and sports such as Montserrat Caballé, Isidre Esteve and Gerard Piqué, who provide their talents and their popularity to the cause, just as many other anonymous volunteers donate their time, making donor pledges or performing other supporting tasks such as benefit activities. As Tester (2001) concluded, telethons demands two kind of audience investment: “time and money” (p.116).

To continue reaching its goals, *La Marató de TV3*, which started out as just a normal television program, has grown and developed over the years and now includes spin-offs such as the *Disc de La Marató* (a DVD collection of music performed during the telethon) and a book entitled *Llibre de La Marató*. The Catalan cultural world also co-operate in this effort to raise funds and to heighten people's awareness and knowledge of the disease under consideration. This participation of celebrities is important since it helps to get more public attention (Littler, 2008).

Every year the program's results reflect TV3's ability to spark interest in a cause and the willingness of the Catalan public to join together in an expression of generosity. Public reaction can be measured not only by the amount of money raised but also by the number of people and companies that rally

to the cause. In addition to their donations, individuals contribute time and energy, both as volunteers and as organizers of the more than 1,000 different events that take place throughout Catalonia in support of *La Marató de TV3*. The high public participation that this telethon receives is also because of the positive messages. 'Something can be done' generates a feeling that people can change a situation (Tester, 2001).

The last edition of *La Marató de TV3*, which was broadcast on Sunday 19 December 2010 and dealt with acquired spinal cord and brain injuries, collected a total of 8.735.103 Euro, the highest amount raised in the program's history. The telethon's website explains "this new success for the program was made possible thanks to the confidence of the general public and the more than 1,300 benefit activities organized throughout the country" (<http://www.tv3.cat/marato/>). With more than 8 million Euro collected in the 2010 telethon, *La Marató de TV3* will be able to promote biomedical research projects on acquired spinal cord and brain injuries. This particular 2010 telethon edition is analyzed over the course of this study; it lasted between 15 and 16 hours and was presented by Albert Om, a well-known television host in Catalonia.

During the 2010 edition, *La Marató de TV3* had received 125.984 calls. That, in relation to the 110.218 of the 2009 edition and the 82.885 of the 2008 edition, means that there is 12.5% and 34.2% increase in calls respectively. From these calls, only 71.325 were able to be answered, and although TV3 actually has an audience's share (spectator's number) of between 14% and 15%, *La Marató de TV3* 2010 started with 16% in the morning which then increased during the telethon to 20%, 25% and up to 26.7% (<http://www.tv3.cat/>).

4. RESULTS

The three sets of data from the expert interviews, the survey, and the document analysis are presented separately, however each of them is analyzed and explained based on the same four issues: compassion (H1), the relationship between harsh images of children, emotionality and donations (H2), success factors of *La Marató de TV3* (H3), and the particular case of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*'s spot (H4). These hypotheses have been derived from the main research question: *What are the success factors of La Marató de TV3 during a time when 'compassion fatigue' is known to exist (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008) along with a financial crisis in Spain?*

4.1 The In-depth Interviews

4.1.1 **Compassion (H1)**

Like many telethons, *La Marató de TV3* has a varied structure (Abad) that combines different elements such as interviews with specialized doctors, interviews with patients who have the disease the telethon is addressing, celebrity performances, celebrity interviews, and showing organized benefit activities such as sports games and picnics, which help create awareness and collect donations for the telethon. In this context, this telethon broadcasts images that produce knowledge and positive feelings to the spectators; however they also display other images, more harsh images that can produce emotionality or sensitivity in the spectators. During the 2010 edition of *La Marató*, there were harsh images of witnesses who have spinal cord and brain injuries. These images will be analyzed in this result section.

The feelings that may emerge as a result of being exposed to others' suffering could be compassion, pity, or empathy. As argued in the theoretical framework, compassion is a personal feeling mostly produced by being exposed to others' suffering. Compassion can be produced by the media (Moeller, 1999). Empathy means perceiving the feelings experienced by another person (Small & Verrochi, 2009), while pity is a self-regarding emotion that we have towards others who are suffering (Cartwright, 1988). The first hypothesis is: **(H1)** *Catalan spectators of the 2010 La Marató de TV3 experience feelings of compassion and empathy towards people suffering, but not necessarily pity. Women experience more feelings of compassion than men.*

First, to prove this hypothesis it is necessary to refer to the interview with Joan-Carles Mèlich to identify compassion, pity, and empathy. The distinction between these three concepts is explained clearly in the expert interview with Mèlich, a doctor of philosophy with a specialty in compassion and the writer of the book *'Ética de la compasión.'* Compassion is "the accompaniment of the other with his suffering." There is no identification between the person who feels compassion and the sufferer,

while when someone feels empathy for another person he/she identifies him/herself with the other's suffering,

If I have compassion the suffering is your suffering but not mine. I cannot put myself at your situation, and I cannot identify myself in your situation. I just can be at your side [...] I accompanied you with your suffering (Mèlich).

Mèlich considers empathy to be a psychological attitude which needs identification between the person who feels empathy and the sufferer. This is related to the ideas of Nussbaum (2001) and Torralba (2010), who states that imagination is needed to achieve identification; imagination moves people out of their being and puts them in the situation of the other. Therefore, the feeling that Torralba (2010) and Nussbaum (2001) defined as compassion is what Mèlich defines as empathy and not as compassion. In terms of this study, the definition of these terms in the theoretical framework is different than the definitions used in the results section. As Mèlich is one of the experts in this particular case, his ideas regarding compassion are used.

The difference between compassion and pity, as Mèlich points out, is that pity is exercised from a power position. The same statement was made by Cartwright (1988) who said that the *Mitleid* concept that Nietzsche discusses may be an "emotion through which we can cultivate a sense of our own power" (Cartwright, 1988, p.563). A good example that Mèlich explained to understand the notion of pity was a scene from the movie *Spartacus* by Stanley Kubrick. Spartacus, who is the gladiator, is struggling and is about to kill a man. At that moment, Spartacus looks to Caesar who makes an order 'do not kill him'. "This is an act of pity, and therefore an act of power; he has absolute power; he has the power to kill or save a person; thus, pity is exercised from the power" (Mèlich).

Consequently, pity is a vertical relationship between two people, the person who feels pity and the pitied person, while compassion is a horizontal relationship (Mèlich). A relation is vertical when one person is above of the other person in some aspect such as authority, intelligence, or social status; a horizontal relation means one person is equal to the other, and one person is at the side of the sufferer to help her/him on her/his suffering.

There are other important aspects to consider regarding the concept of compassion. Mèlich defines compassion as an ethical relationship and pity as a morality relationship. Compassion is an intimate relationship between two people, thus it is an ethical relationship. Pity is a public relationship, thus it is a moral relationship (Mèlich). Following the ideas of this author, "the morality categorizes, it is a normative order and therefore discriminates while ethics is the response that puts in question the moral order." This viewpoint supports Williams (2008) who explains that, "as a virtue, compassion is not selective; as an incentive for action, the desirability of compassion endures independent of the

‘who, what, where, when, and why’ of suffering’s experience” (p.11). Similarly, Silverstone (2007) states, “compassion relies on identification with the plight of another. It is personal, and individual. Compassion takes place in private. Pity, on the other hand, is public, political, and generalizable” (p.131). In sum, pity is public and political, while compassion is intimate and ethical.

It is now clear what compassion is and its differentiation with pity and empathy. Although Moeller (1999) argues compassion can be produced by the media, all the statements explained above are ideas that confirm the impossibility of a compassionate relationship between a telethon’s spectator and the sufferers that it broadcasts. Therefore, the Catalan audience does not feel compassion while watching the telethon *La Marató de TV3*.

Firstly, the television program *La Marató de TV3* is public because it is broadcast and everyone can watch it; however, compassion is an intimate relationship which takes place in private. Secondly, the spectator cannot touch the sufferer that the telethon represents because of the distance between the spectator and the sufferer. The physical contact with the sufferer is essential, according to Mèlich, to have the feeling of compassion. Thirdly, the compassion response cannot generate good conscience, which refers to the feeling of satisfaction one may get after donating, knowing that he or she contributed to a good cause. Most of the spectators feel good after being aware of the amount collected on the 2010 edition as will be discussed later in the results of the survey. Fourthly, a feeling of compassion does not exist between a sick witness of *La Marató de TV3* and the spectator since a requirement of compassion is feeling that compassion for a particular person in an intimate situation (Mèlich), and in this case the data reveals that people donate or participate for a research cause and not because of the sick testimonials they are watching on the telethon.

In this sense, following Mèlich, Catalan spectators of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* can experience empathy or pity, but never compassion. And so, the first hypothesis is only partly proven. However, it would be impossible to achieve such a high number of donations and participations from the audience without the emotionality, empathy, identification or understanding of the other’s suffering (Basté; Abad). Carme Basté, the director of *La Marató de TV3*’s Foundation, Xavier Abad, the director of *La Marató de TV3*’s 2010 edition, and Carles Checa, the creative director of TV3’s and *La Marató de TV3*’s marketing, do not use the terms compassion and pity to define their telethon since, “compassion has had a bad press in philosophy” (Mèlich). However, “what many philosophers such as Nietzsche and Espinosa criticize is not compassion, but pity” (Mèlich). Therefore, this ‘bad press’ of compassion may actually be of pity.

“Compassion puts me above the sufferer; for this reason I do not like the compassion term, and in this sense [...] I would prefer to put myself in his/her side” (Checa). Like some other philosophers,

Checa also uses the term compassion when he is talking about pity because he expresses a vertical relationship. Although their dislike of the compassion concept, Basté, Abad and Checa agree that in *La Marató de TV3* there is emotionality among the audience. However, they do not believe it is the main reason for the telethon's success (Checa). They affirm that their proximity with the viewers, the community feelings, among others factors are the reasons why this telethon achieves such success every year (see section 4.1.3). Finally, Basté points out that *La Marató de TV3* needs both discourses, the rational and the emotional, to achieve a high number of donations and participations. This idea of Basté is linked to the study of Dyck and Coldevin (1992) who find that the combination of rationality and emotional images results in the audience perceiving the telethon in a rational way rather than an emotive one.

In *La Marató* there is a good balance between the rational discourse [scientific investigation] and the emotional discourse. [...] Through emotional speech we rationalize something as rational as the scientific research and as rational as knowing that there won't be immediately results, and that the fruits are uncertain (Basté).

In sum, Catalan spectators of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* did not experience feelings of compassion, but perhaps experienced pity or empathy. The next section analyzes the data collected by the survey, and addresses the concepts of empathy or pity in relation with the audience of *La Marató de TV3*. Does the audience feel pity, empathy or both while watching the Catalan telethon? Also in the next section, gender and compassion are discussed.

4.1.2 Relationship Harsh Images of Children – Emotionality – Donations (H2)

La Marató de TV3 2010 consists of different types of images, soft and entertainment-oriented images such as celebrity performances, and harsher images, for example, a five-year old child quadriplegic. This impactful case was broadcast this last edition 2010 of the telethon and those images, which we refer to as harsh images, may not leave spectators indifferent and could produce emotionality.

As discussed above, this emotionality could be pity or empathy, but not compassion (Mèlich), and it can generate action, such as donating or participating in the telethon. Thus, the second hypothesis is: **(H2)** *In telethons, particularly in La Marató de TV3 2010, a relationship exists between (1) the harsh or graphic images of sick children by which the audience perceives their suffering, (2) the audience's emotionality (feelings of compassion, empathy or pity), and (3) the willingness to donate and to participate in a telethon.*

Images displaying suffering create “specific semantic fields where emotions and dispositions to action vis-a-vis the suffering of ‘others’ are evoked for the spectator” (Chouliaraki, 2006a, p.262). Like many telethons, *La Marató de TV3* displays images of suffering in a specific way, using personal accounts or real images of sufferers' experiences with the sickness. Depending on how these are

represented, audiences may feel emotions and sensitive to these images to a certain degree; these feelings may be empathy or pity, and as a consequence, they can generate action in terms of donation or participation in the telethon.

Basté and Abad agree that the personal experiences of sufferers shown in the telethon's 2010 edition possibly produces a reaction such as a donation; for example, after the representation of a child sufferer named Marina in the 2010 edition, the calls to donate increased immediately (Basté). The case of Marina will be analyzed when discussing the online survey and the document analysis (see section 4.2 and 4.3). Moreover, the program tends to place the harsh testimonials at peak viewer times, and as a result, those moments receive a high level of calls and donations (Basté). "All witnesses are placed where we think they should be" (Abad) and the producers of *La Marató de TV3* consider the option to situate harsh and dramatic cases that leave the audience a bit restless or disturbed at the moments before the news broadcast of TV3, when the percentage of viewers is elevated. This occurs twice in the 16 hour duration of *La Marató* (Abad).

Identification with the sufferer is important to "cause a reaction of the audience" (Mèlich), thus empathy is probably related to the action of giving or participating in a telethon (Abad). This is one of the reasons why it is important to select the "best" witnesses, who will explain their personal experience with the sickness during the program *La Marató de TV3* in a way that is relatable. These testimonials should be representative of all provinces of Catalonia and also representatives of all kind of people, such as women, men and children (Abad). Some testimonials are chosen because they are so unique, such as the testimonials of two brothers, both in a wheelchair as a result of two different traffic accidents. These testimonials were broadcast the latest edition of the telethon in 2010 (see image). Some other witnesses are chosen because they are recent cases. By selecting a large variety of testimonials, *La Marató de TV3* aims to create an easy identification between the spectators, which encompass many different types of people, and witnesses. By doing this, *La Marató de TV3* aims at an easy identification between the spectators and the witnesses represented by the telethon.



Pictures of children, such as a four-year old child who has a disease, can be especially effective in getting the attention of audiences (Tester, 2001). Like the majority of telethon producers, *La Marató de TV3*'s producers are aware of this phenomenon, therefore sometimes the children testimonials are situated in the moments that the programs needs a reaction from the audience the most (Abad),

If we understand compassion as a feeling of identification with the person who suffers, I think compassion is essential when it is necessary to cause a reaction of the audience. This reaction does not mean compassion – money donation; but is based on awareness; ears and eyes should be open to a possible unknown reality. This is already a reaction. [...] I do not know if it is compassion, solidarity or sensitivity but obviously there is a sentiment in this level. [...] And this can involve to donate (Abad).

However, Basté and Abad understand that *La Marató de TV3* does not have suffering and harsh images, it has testimonials. All the witnesses are people who can transmit a positive message to the audience, explaining their experiences and their willingness to fight and hope for a better future. These personal accounts disclose what *La Marató de TV3* wants to achieve (Basté).

Although *La Marató de TV3* situates harsh witnesses in strategic moments when necessary, they are not looking for just an emotional response, they are looking for a reaction, “the fact that the viewer feels sensitive for that person [patient] is a personal reaction of the spectator, and he will feel it always; but I cannot ever encourage such feelings. I promote solidarity, understanding, proximity... but not compassion” (Checa). Furthermore, Abad explains that people donate or participate without watching the telethon program or without an emotional response to the testimonials. This may happen because the project has a long history and tradition in Catalonia. These and more success factors of *La Marató de TV3* are explained now.

4.1.3 Success Factors of *La Marató de TV3* (H3)

As Abad points out, some people do not need to watch the telethon or have an emotional reaction to the witnesses to donate or participate. This means that situating harsh images at the moment of high audience levels is not the reason why *La Marató de TV3* achieves a high number of donations and participations. This aspect will be analyzed later during the survey analysis, in which the audience explains their opinions and feelings. From this context, the third hypothesis is: **(H3)** *The reason why people participate and donate so much to La Marató de TV3 is not merely because of the compassionate feelings, but for other reasons such as the community feeling, the proximity the program has with the Catalan people, and the potential to generate identification of the audience with the sufferers.*

The telethon *La Marató de TV3* is not just a telethon that needs the television program to achieve a high number of participation and donations and extensive popularity in Catalonia, “*La Marató* has become an appointment, an event” (Checa). As Basté explains, every year there are more donations before and after the television program, therefore it is not the response of watching the images of the witnesses that produces contributions. Nowadays, this telethon is a solid and consolidated project (Abad), and does not need harsh images to achieve participation, popularity, or donations from Catalan citizens.

Firstly, *La Marató de TV3* achieves its success because the premise revolves around scientific research (Basté). The themes of the telethon vary, as each year it is based on a different disease. This is to ensure diversity among cases, which reaches every kind of spectator and produces more identification between audiences and sufferers (Abad). “We want to be plural, and we think that everyone should have the possibility to get support from *La Marató*” (Abad).

However, Checa points out that the choice of a particular disease is secondary to the importance of the project in general; people are not donating because of a specific disease, but they donate to the Catalan solidarity project in general. Although, if someone has a family member or friend with the featured disease, he/she may donate more that edition than previous ones.

Secondly, credibility of and belief in the solidarity project are key elements (Abad; Basté; Checa). People trust that the money they give goes to a good cause (www.tv3.cat/marato). Furthermore, confidence and credibility towards the project also exists towards the testimonials featured during the program. The reason why spectators trust the testimonials is because their stories are current, “from people who are proximate with the audience and have an important level of enclosure. [...] Therefore, there is a good identification between the viewer and the patient because they have proximity with each other” (Abad).

Thirdly, Abad and Basté agree that the *La Marató de TV3* project achieves such a success because of its transparency. They argue that all the processes involved in the solidarity project are transparent; everyone can be aware of how much each research project receives and for which reason. “We have two important transparencies in our project: one is economic, which is public information that everyone can consult, and the other is the choice of the projects. [...] We work with an evaluation agency” (Basté). These transparencies are factors that the audiences consider positive; people need to know where their money is going to trust the project and the cause (Basté).

Fourthly, another possible success factor is the character of Catalan people. As Basté explains, “when Catalan people prove that the project is rigorous and its funds clear, they always join.” To understand this communal bonding idea, it is necessary to explain Checa’s definition of the telethon *La Marató de TV3*:

La Marató is now a social phenomenon. I think is an identity phenomenon and it can only be understood when different factors converge which are the ones that converge in *La Marató*. In one hand, it unites one country, with people that has a way of doing and being and demonstrating things very discreet but very effective too. [...] And then, there is another part that is the pride of country, the fact of feeling proud of the community you belong to and show this pride with facts. I am convinced that nowadays *La Marató* is this, and this is more important than the formal aspects that it could be explained (Checa).

Abad agrees with Checa, confirming that it is a country project in which “people live [the telethon] as a flag of pride.” Moreover, Checa adds that *La Marató de TV3* satisfies the Catalan people; people feel like they’ve done something worthwhile after watching how much *La Marató* has achieved through their donations. All of these different factors may be the reason why *La Marató de TV3* 2010 achieves success during a time when both a ‘compassion fatigue’ and a financial crisis are known to exist (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008).

Moreover, the television channel TV3 is a key factor for *La Marató de TV3*. “TV3 is a symbol of proximity and confidence” (Checa), and this is an important and positive aspect for the Catalan telethon. The relation that Catalan people have with TV3 is one of the success reasons of *La Marató de TV3* according to Basté. Proximity is one of the main factors that produces confidence in what the channel broadcasts. As Checa explains, “TV3 has three axes: proximity, confidence and quality. [...] No one can be as proximate as we are, basically because of a factor of language, a factor of geography, etc.” Moreover, Basté adds that the implication that exists between the channel TV3 and Catalan society does not exist in many places, “TV3 has always had this empathy, this feeling of being the Catalan people’s channel” (Basté).

Finally, the community feeling is also a success factor of *La Marató de TV3* 2010. As Basté points out, the fact that the Catalan people who participate and donate to *La Marató de TV3* feel that this is a common project instead of an individual project, is essential. “This project forms part of yourself and it is your common project” (Basté), and it shows how Catalan people are (Checa). As Abad explains:

It is a project that has its history, it has been consolidated. And after twenty years people live it as their project and they live it as a flag, as a flag of pride. [...] We have explained very clear what our goals are and how we do it, how we work. We are close to people, there are no distances, so people feel close to us and, this plus the pride of our country is what makes it work (Abad).

In sum, there are several success factors of *La Marató de TV3* following the responses of the four expert interviews. The second hypothesis is proven because the reasons why people participate and donate to *La Marató de TV3* are (1) the community feeling, (2) the proximity of the program to the Catalan people and, (3) the potential to generate identification between the audience with the sufferers. However, these three success factors are not the only factors that exist following the expert interviews; there are other factors such as transparency, pride, solidity, variety of disease, confidence and trust to TV3, the project and witnesses, shared project feeling, and the character of Catalan people.

4.1.4 The Particular Case of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*’s Spot (H4)

The last hypothesis is the following: **(H4)** *The carefully built up credibility of the project La Marató de TV3 among its audiences is a key element in its current success.* To prove this last hypothesis, the

analysis will be based on the particular case of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*'s television spot. The 2010 edition of the telethon is an interesting case to investigate because the telethon had for the first time featured a case not from Catalonia. Therefore, the last hypothesis is based on the confidence the audience has in the project *La Marató de TV3*, and how it could be a significant reason why the 2010 edition received the highest amount raised in the program's history. The proximity of the audience and the sufferer was reduced because the featured case was from the United States and not from Catalonia like all previous editions.

Each edition of *La Marató de TV3* is preceded by a television advertisement that aims to sensitize the viewers to offer their help for a good cause. These commercials are impactful; they tend to leave the viewers with images that transmit the values of *La Marató*: solidarity, generosity, and collaboration between people.⁶ The main function of this campaign is to achieve awareness of what *La Marató* is and to show the solidarity values of this project (Checa). The advertising of the telethon is very important (Abad; Basté; Checa) and, "sometimes the spot is more important than the program itself because it is the first image of *La Marató* and it is what really activate the audience to be looking forward to watch the telethon" (Abad). Another relevant aspect is the synergy between all the TV3 programs with *La Marató de TV3*. All programs are related, connected, complement each other, and are involved with *La Marató* (Abad; Checa). However, it is difficult to create an effective advertisement since "the programs look for the sensitivity, awareness, and entertainment in 15 hours, while the spot looks for them in 30 seconds" (Basté).

This year was about acquired spinal cord and brain injuries, and the campaign had the good luck to find the images of the father and his son [...]. It was great because the solidarity act of that father who gave everything for the son was connected to the disease (Checa).

The advertisement of the 2010 edition of *La Marató de TV3* is a story about the struggle of Team Hoyt⁷. The protagonists of this spot are Dick and Rick Hoyt, a father and his son from Massachusetts in the United States, who compete together in marathons and triathlons across the country. Rick was born in 1962 and was diagnosed as a spastic quadriplegic with cerebral



palsy. In the spring of 1977, Rick told his father that he wanted to participate in a 5-mile benefit run and Dick agreed to push Rick in his wheelchair. They finished next to last. That night, Rick told his father, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not handicapped." This sentence is featured in the last seconds of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*'s spot in Catalan language. This was just the beginning of

⁶ <http://www.tv3.cat/marato/espot>

⁷ <http://www.teamhoyt.com/>

what has become over 1,000 races completed, including marathons, duathlons and triathlons (six of them being Ironman competitions). Dick pulls Rick in a special boat as they swim, carries him in a special seat in the front of a bicycle, and pushes him in a special wheelchair as they run. Their story was the inspiration to form The Hoyt Foundation in 1989, a non-profit organization aspiring to build character, self-confidence, and self-esteem in America's disabled young people.

The same images of their story were used to create the spot for the 2010 edition of *La Marató de TV3*. The images were used in conjunction with a Catalan song by Montserrat Caballé and Montserrat Martí called '*Seràs en el meu cor.*' This spot, which was broadcast some months before the program, was a success in Catalonia, "The spectators were absolutely heated with the promo[tion] before the program. This does not always happen, but this year it has worked really well. They have already introduced its point of emotionally" (Basté). Abad states this spot has been ideal because no one has gotten sick of watching it.

It is important that people watch the program with a bit of the sensitivity that the spots transmit (Abad). The TV3's creative director explains, "We are always afraid the campaign will not work" (Checa). This 2010 television spot produced many discussions between the team of *La Marató de TV3*. The facts that the protagonists were from another country and that the father is a veteran were some of the issues discussed (Checa). Thus, the most significant, and also the most risky, aspect was the lack of proximity of the case (Abad). A lack of proximity would eliminate one of the main success factors of the telethon. However, this had the opposite effect. Although the case was not proximate to the Catalan people, as it featured people from another country, the advertisement touched the audience and encouraged them to talk about the case featured in the telethon, to look forward to watching it, and most importantly, to donate and/or participate.

The spot for the 2010 edition has worked, explains Abad, since it stirred emotions in the audience. It made people look forward to watching the telethon, and to donate and/or participate before, during and after the television program. H4 is therefore proven, since the confidence and the credibility that the audience have with the project and with the testimonials are the reason why the 2010 edition received the highest amount of money raised in the program's history, even though the proximity between the audience and the testimonials was reduced.

La Marató de TV3, with a high level of quality year after year, receives the most prestigious awards in advertising festivals such as the San Sebastian's Festival and the Festival *Iberoamericano de la Publicidad*.⁸ May 6th 2011, the 2010 campaign of *La Marató de TV3* received an award for the "best

⁸ <http://www.tv3.cat/marato/spot>

social project of social awareness and sensitivity” of the *Publifestival*. It also received “best television spot” with the real of Team Hoyt.⁹ The director of the Foundation, Carme Basté, the creative director of marketing of TV3, Carles Checa, and the director of the program *La Marató de TV3*, Xavier Abad received the award in Barcelona.

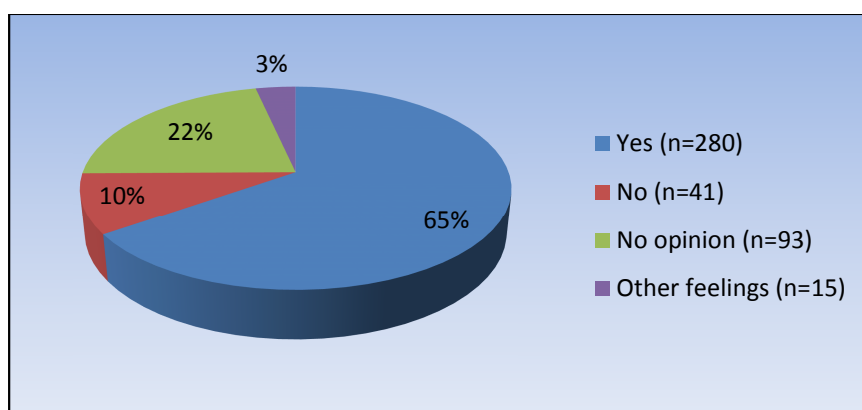
4.2 The Survey

4.2.1 Compassion (H1)

The first hypothesis is: **(H1)** *Catalan spectators of the 2010 La Marató de TV3 experience feelings of compassion and empathy towards people suffering, but not necessarily pity. Women experience more feelings of compassion than men.* Drawing upon the data from the expert interviews, it can be concluded that Catalan spectators of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* do not experienced feelings of compassion, but they may experience feelings of pity, empathy or both. In this section, these feelings and the experience of sensitivity by the audience will be explained by analyzing the data gathered from the survey. After, the second part of the hypothesis will be discussed.

A question that helps to analyze the audience in this study is: “does the Catalan audience feel emotions while watching *La Marató de TV3* 2010?” Although *La Marató de TV3* is a telethon based on awareness of diseases, the entertainment aspects and the witnesses’ will to fight and hope for a better future does not show only the suffering of some sick people. According to the data, 65% (n=280) of the people felt emotion while 10% (n=41) did not have an emotional feeling while watching *La Marató de TV3* 2010, as the table below shows.

Graph 3: Feelings or emotions while watching *La Marató de TV3* 2010 (N=429).



Following Ibrahim (2010), when a representation of the media “is able to mobilize strong emotions globally or nationally it may enable various forms of humanitarian reaction at individual, communal, national or global levels” (p.124). Therefore, the emotions that the majority of the Catalan audiences

⁹ <http://blogs.tv3.cat/marato.php?itemid=40002>

feel while watching images on *La Marató de TV3* may be the reason why some people react by donating or participating. Sympathy is not a possible reaction in *La Marató de TV3* because it means “feeling for” someone, which use to be happiness (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1990, p.5-6) and this telethon features people who are suffering Compassion is a private relationship (Mèlich, 2011) and therefore is not possible in a public television program. Hence, the question to formulate here is: “does the audience feel empathy, pity or both?”

Empathy is a psychological attitude (Mèlich, 2011) that requires sharing the perceived emotions of another, “feeling with” another (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1990). It requires imagination to put people in the shoes of the other (Torralba, 2010). Therefore, there is identification between the person experiencing empathy and the sufferer. While responding to the survey, the respondents were required to watch a video based on the testimonial of a 5-year old child called Marina, who suffered a car accident that caused a serious injury. These images were broadcast during the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* at 09.30 pm, just after the TV3 night informative program. This is the time of day that the number of viewers is at its highest. During and after this item the telethon received the highest number of donations and calls of the whole program. This will be explained further in the document analysis (see section 4.3). After the video, respondents had to answer four questions about these images and their feelings.

60.17% (n=216) of respondents could imagine themselves in the shoes of Marina’s mother, who explains her experience of living with her daughter with a handicap during the video. Therefore, the majority of respondents identify themselves with Marina or her mother. This means that 60.17% (n=216) of Catalan audiences feel empathy with the presented testimonials during *La Marató de TV3* program in a certain way.

Another feeling audiences may experience while watching *La Marató de TV3* is pity, which is defined as a self-regarding feeling that increases the power of the person that pities someone else (Schopenhauer, 1995; Cartwright, 1988). Pity is also public and political (Silverstone, 2007; Mèlich, 2011) which is produced by an extent of media techniques and discourses (Chouliaraki, 2006b). According to the data collected from the survey, 87.47% (n=314) of the respondents felt pity for Marina or her mother, and 89.69% (n=322) felt sad after watching these images. Therefore, over three-quarters of Catalan spectators of *La Marató de TV3* also feel pity while watching the program. This pity, however, does not necessarily have to be self-regarding or an increase of their own power as the audience, according to Schopenhauer (1995). This kind of pity could be considered as compassion for some scholars such as Moeller (1999) and Tester (2001); however, in this study we will follow the definitions given by the expert interviewee, Mèlich, who argues that compassion is not

a public feeling. In sum, it is clear that in certain moments of the television program, some Catalan spectators of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* experienced feelings of empathy and pity towards the people in suffering, but not compassion.

This section will now address the second part of H1, whether women feel more compassion than men. Since compassion cannot exist by watching a public television program (Mèlich), the hypothesis must be adapted. Instead of compassion, this study will analyze if women experience more feelings of empathy and pity than men. To prove or disprove this part of the first hypothesis, a cross tabulation has been done with SPSS between the gender of the respondents and other variables related to their feelings while watching or after watching images of *La Marató de TV3*. Also, a chi-square test is applied, which allows the researcher to establish “how confident we can be that there is a relationship between the two variables in the population” (Bryman, 2008, p.334).

As explained in the methodological section, of the 350 respondents who fully completed the survey, 57.14% (n=200) are women and 42.86% (n=150) are men. The following cross tabulation shows that 77.2% (n=142) of women felt emotion watching the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*, while 60.1% (n=83) of men felt emotion or sensitivity (see cross tabulation 1). This relation between these two variables is significant; the *p* value of the Chi-Square test is 0.004 and the Chi-square is with two degrees of freedom = 10.989. This significance of the cross tabulation means that this relationship could be found in another study. The significance of the Chi-square tells us whether the difference or the relation between the two variables actually exists. The degrees of freedom are used to assess the quality of the data and to evaluate whether the Chi-square measurement can be used.

Cross Tabulation 1: Gender – Emotion/Sensitivity watching *La Marató de TV3* 2010 (N=322) (*p*=0.004).

		Gender		Total	
		Men	Women		
Emotion	Yes		83	142	225
		% Emotion	36,9%	63,1%	100,0%
		% Gender	60,1%	77,2%	69,9%
	No		18	15	33
		% Emotion	54,5%	45,5%	100,0%
		% Gender	13,0%	8,2%	10,2%
	Without opinion		37	27	64
		% Emotion	57,8%	42,2%	100,0%
		% Gender	26,8%	14,7%	19,9%
Total		138	184	322	
	% Emotion	42,9%	57,1%	100,0%	
	% Gender	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10,959 ^a	2	,004
Likelihood Ratio	10,902	2	,004
Linear-by-Linear Association	10,328	1	,001
N of Valid Cases	322		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14,14.

Other cross tabulations performed are between gender and the three questions that the respondents had to answer after watching the video of the testimonial called Marina. The first question (Q26), “do you feel pity for Marina or her mother?” will help give insights if women experience more feelings of pity than men. In this case, the p value of the Chi-Square test is 0.306, and the Chi-square has one degree of freedom = 1.048. Therefore this cross tabulation did not produce significant results. However, frequency analysis indicates that in this case, 89.0% (n=178) of women and 85.3% (n=128) of men say that they felt pity for them. However, the Chi-square test determinates that there is not a difference, it cannot be reported that women experience more feelings of pity than men while watching child harsh images of *La Marató de TV3*.

The second question (Q27), “do you feel sad after watching these images?” will answer if women are more sensitive and feel sad more often than men while watching these images. Frequency analysis reveals the following: 92% (n=184) of the women and 86% (n=129) of the men felt sad. However, the significance of the Chi-Square value is 0.71 and the Chi-square has one degree of freedom = 3.264, therefore without significant results. Thus, it cannot be reported that women feel sad more often than men.

The last question (Q28) explores feelings of empathy. The question reads: “are you able to imagine yourself at the same situation of Marina’s mother after watching those images?” That cross tabulation has a p value of the Chi-Square test of 0.659 and the Chi-square has one degree of freedom = 0.194, so it does not produce significant results. Frequency analysis reveals that 61.0% (n=122) of women and 58.7% (n=88) of men have empathy with Marina or her mother and are able to imagine themselves in their situation. However, because the Chi-square test determinates that there is not a difference, it cannot be reported that more women than men feel empathy while watching some images of *La Marató de TV3 2010*.

Finally, it would be interesting to analyze if women donate more than men after watching emotional images such as Marina’s video. Dyck and Coldevin (1992) analyze the fundamentally gender-focused

meanings of compassion, and they find that while women need emotional appeals, the men need more rational appeals to donate to the telethon. Due to their previous work, we will relate gender and willingness to donate without having an ambition to do an experimental design like Dyck and Coldevin have done.

The following cross tabulation relates gender with participation and donation (see cross tabulation 2). The results are that 90.5% (n=181) of the women and 78.0% (n=117) of the men would donate or participate to the program after watching the images of Marina. The relation between these two variables is significant because the significance of the Chi-Square is 0.04, lower than 0.050. And the Chi-square has one degree of freedom = 3.832. Thus, women have more willingness to donate than men after watching the emotional images of the suffering of Marina and her mother.

Cross Tabulation 2: Gender – Willingness to donate/participate (N=350) (p=0.04)

		Gender		Total
		Men	Women	
Donation/Participation	Yes	117	181	298
	% Donation/Participation	39,3%	60,7%	100,0%
	% Gender	78,0%	90,5%	85,1%
	No	33	19	52
	% Donation/Participation	63,5%	36,5%	100,0%
	% Gender	22,0%	9,5%	14,9%
Total		150	200	350
% Donation/Participation		42,9%	57,1%	100,0%
% Gender		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

According to data from the survey the last part of the first hypothesis, which is based on the statement that women experience more feelings of pity and empathy than men, cannot be proven. This idea is supported by Höijer (2004), who finds that women react with compassion more often than men. However, according to data, women have more willingness to participate or donate than men after watching harsh testimonials of children who are suffering from a disease.

4.2.2 Relationship Harsh Images of Children – Emotionality – Donations (H2)

Media can be considered a key site for expressing and managing public emotions (Pantti & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). Using children as witnesses in telethons can be especially effective in achieving more donations and participation from the audience (Höijer, 2004; Tester, 2001). This is a result of an increase in feelings of sensitivity that those images produce. Some of the testimonials of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* featured children who suffer from a disease, in the case of Marina, acquired spinal cord and brain injuries. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyze, in this case, whether these

images of children produce emotionality to the audience which then turns to a willingness to donate or participate during the telethon.

The first interesting result regarding harsh images of children is that most of the respondents could remember some of the testimonials that were featured in *La Marató de TV3 2010*; most of them remember the cases of children such as Martí and Marina, two of the most called. Most respondents remember what has really touched them. Testimonials involving children are some of the cases that they remember most vividly, as they were feeling particularly sensitive while watching those images. The participation and donation (only 27.43%; n=110) of the respondents depends on the kind of the disease *La Marató de TV3* is about each particular year. Over a quarter, (27.43%; n=110) of respondents wrote (in an open question on the survey) the reason why the disease influences their donation/participation, and the majority of answers were because they knew someone who has the disease. However, diseases that affect children were also cited as a main reason to participate and donate. Therefore, images of children or situations that affect children generate greater willingness to donate or participate during a telethon.

After watching the video of the five-year old Marina, the respondents were asked to answer some questions about how they were feeling, and if they had a willingness to donate or participate. The vast majority, 87.47% (n=314), of the respondents felt pity after watching the video, 89.69% (n=322) felt sad, 60.17% (n=216) felt empathy, and 85.24% (n=306) of the respondents were willing to donate or participate after watching this video.

The cross tabulation between emotionality participating or donate shows if people who felt emotion, empathy or pity while watching were the ones more likely to donate or participate (see cross tabulation 3). This cross tabulation shows that the *p* value of the Chi-square test is 0.000 and the degrees of freedom are 3 = 34.792. Therefore it proved that this relationship is significant; 81.8% (n=130) of respondents who felt emotion while watching the 2010 edition participated or donated, while only 6.9% (n=11) of respondents did not feel emotion, participate, or donate. Therefore, watching the program and feeling emotion while watching it is a factor that increases the willingness to donate or to participate during a telethon.

Cross Tabulation 3: Emotion feeling – Participate/Donate to *La Marató de TV3* (N=418) (p=0.000)

		Participate/Donate		Total
		Yes	No	
Feelings of emotion	Yes	130	142	272
	Feelings of emotion	47,8%	52,2%	100,0%
	% Participate/Donate	81,8%	54,8%	65,1%

No		11	29	40
	% Feelings of emotion	27,5%	72,5%	100,0%
	% Participate/Donate	6,9%	11,2%	9,6%
Without Opinion		13	78	91
	% Feelings of emotion	14,3%	85,7%	100,0%
	% Participate/Donate	8,2%	30,1%	21,8%
Other emotional experiences		5	10	15
	% Feelings of emotion	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
	% Donate/Participate	3,1%	3,9%	3,6%
Total		159	259	418
	% Feelings of emotion	38,0%	62,0%	100,0%
	% Participate/Donate	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Another relevant cross tabulation is performed specifically between pity and giving or participating after watching Marina's video (see cross tabulation 4). Since the significance of the Chi-Square value is 0.50 and the degrees of freedom are 1, these results are not statistically significant. Frequency analysis in this particular case, however, reveals that 88.9% (n=272) of the respondents who felt pity or sorry for Marina or her mother had willingness to donate or participate, while 11.1% (n=34) who did not feel pity or sorry for Marina and her mother were willing to donate or participate after watching those images.

Cross Tabulation 4: Pity feeling for Marina's witness – Participate/Donate to *La Marató de TV3* (N=359) (p=0.50)

		Donate/Participate		Total
		Yes	No	
Pity's feeling	Yes	272	42	314
	% Pity's feeling	86,6%	13,4%	100,0%
	% Donate/Participate	88,9%	79,2%	87,5%
	No	34	11	45
	% Pity's feeling	75,6%	24,4%	100,0%
	% Donate/Participate	11,1%	20,8%	12,5%
Total		306	53	359
	% Pity's feeling	85,2%	14,8%	100,0%
	% Donate/Participate	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Finally, this findings prove the second hypothesis (**H2**): *In telethons, particularly in La Marató de TV3 2010, a relationship exists between (1) the harsh or graphic images of sick children by which the*

audience perceives their suffering, (2) the audience's emotionality (feelings of compassion, empathy or pity), and (3) the willingness to donate and to participate in a telethon.

4.2.3 Success Factors of *La Marató de TV3* (H3)

The third hypothesis (H3) states: *The reason why people participate and donate so much to La Marató de TV3 is not merely because of the compassionate feelings, but for other reasons such as the community feeling, the proximity the program has with the Catalan people, and the potential to generate identification of the audience with the sufferers.*

Before delving into the main aspects of the third hypothesis, it is interesting to consider the vast popularity *La Marató de TV3* has in Catalonia. Of the survey respondents, 93.60% (n=468) know what *La Marató de TV3* is, while 89.87% (n=346) believe there is a strong social conscience and awareness of the telethon in Catalonia. Only 5.19% (n=20) answered no and the other 4.94% (n=19) checked the option 'without opinion'. This result confirms the success of *La Marató de TV3* in Catalonia, not only for its achievements of donations and participations, but also for the awareness people have about this solidarity project.

Another result of the cross tabulation is between if the respondents have donated or participated and if they had donated to other causes independent of *La Marató de TV3* during the last year (see cross tabulation 5). The expected result is to obtain 50% of the relation, since the same people who give to the Catalan telethon might be expected to also give to other causes. However, is not the case; 45.5% (n=61) of the respondents who gave to the Catalan telethon 2010 edition have also given to other causes. Therefore, 54.5% (n=73) of people who donate or participate to *La Marató de TV3* do not give to other causes. Moreover, 68.3% (n=138) of respondents have not donated or participated in *La Marató de TV3* or to other causes. These findings are only applicable to this particular case and no differences between groups can be observed, as the *p* value of the Chi-square test is 0.10 and the degrees of freedom are 1 and is therefore statistically insignificant.

Cross Tabulation 5: Participation or donation to *La Marató de TV3* – Participation or donation to other causes (N=336) (p=0.10)

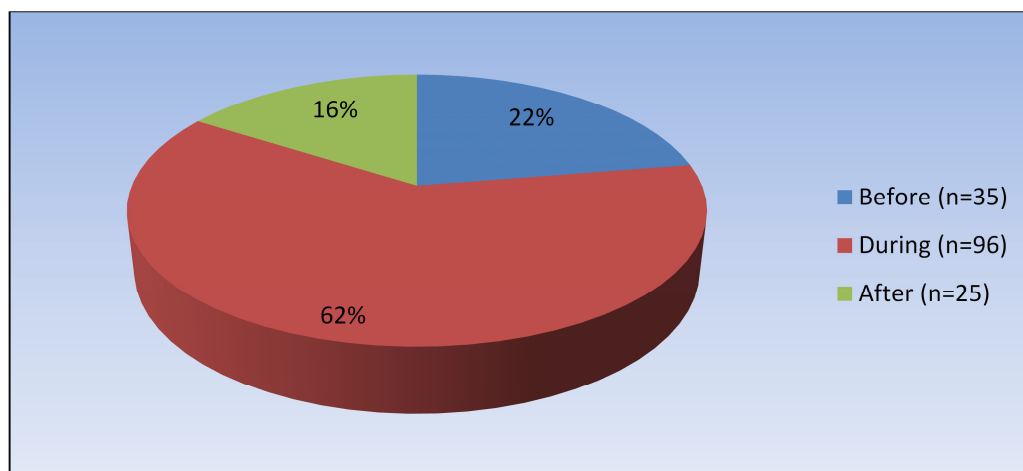
		Donate to other causes		Total	
		Yes	No		
Participate/Donate	Yes	Count	61	73	134
		% Participate/Donate	45,5%	54,5%	100,0%
		% Donate to other causes	48,8%	34,6%	39,9%

No	64	138	202
% Participate/Donate	31,7%	68,3%	100,0%
% Donate to other causes	51,2%	65,4%	60,1%
Total	125	211	336
% Participate/Donate	37,2%	62,8%	100,0%
% Donate to other causes	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

First, it has been analyzed whether people participate and donate to *La Marató de TV3* because of sensitive feelings they feel while watching the program, or because of other reasons. Of the respondents, 38.04% (n=159) participated or donated in the 2010 edition of *La Marató de TV3*, but of these respondents 61.74% (n=92) indicate that the images of the testimonials featured during the program are not the reason why they participate or donate. What encourages Catalan citizens to participate and donate to *La Marató de TV3* are not the compassionate or sensitive feelings that they may feel in a certain moment while watching the telethon, but other reasons that will be explained further in the subsequent section.

Furthermore, as Basté points out, in the latest editions of the telethon there are donations before and after the television program airs as well. This proves the idea that the audience members who donated in the 2010 edition do not donate just as a response of the sensitivity they may feel while watching harsh images, but for other reasons. As Graph 4 illustrates, 22% (n=35) of the respondents participated or donated in the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* before the program, 62% (n=96) during the program, and 16% (n=25) after the program.

Graph 4: Moment that the audiences have donated to *La Marató de TV3* 2010 (N=156)¹⁰.

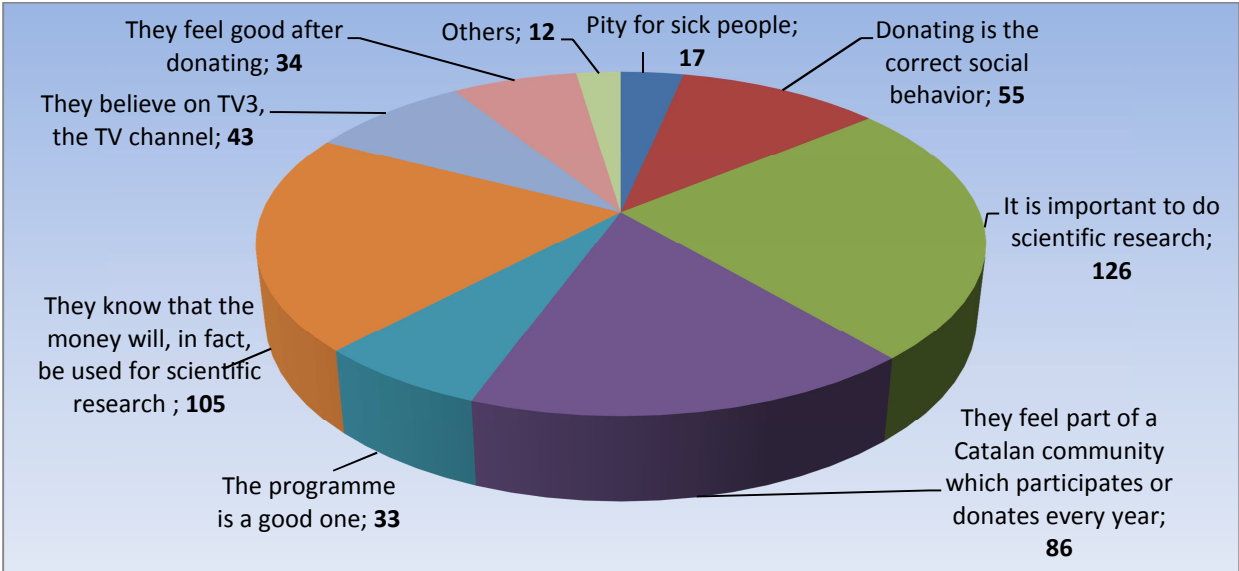


¹⁰ Of the 500 respondents only 151 people answered this question because only people who knew what was that Catalan telethon and who had donated a quantity of money this last edition 2010 were allowed to answered it. Therefore, this low number of respondents was expected.

Another result supporting the fact that people do not donate or participate just because of the images featured during the telethon, is that 86% (n=129) of respondents were willing to participate or donate *before* watching the program. Therefore, the majority of respondents did not change their mind regarding donating or participating when they saw the images during the telethon. Moreover, 64.34% (n=258) of respondents are willing to participate or donate the next edition of *La Marató de TV3* program, 25.94% (n=104) answered ‘no opinion’ and 9.73% (n=39) answer ‘no.’

To understand the reason why the Catalan telethon *La Marató de TV3* has achieved such popularity in Catalonia and Spain, and why the last edition collected the highest amount of donations in the program’s history, the results of the online survey are essential as the feelings, opinions and actions of the Catalan citizens regarding the telethon is what makes this telethon a success every year. The following graph displays the different motivations or reasons why people have donated or participated in *La Marató de TV3* 2010. The main four motivations are, (1) they think it is important to do scientific research to achieve a better future (83.44% - n=126), (2) they know that the money will, in fact, be used for scientific research (69.54% - n=105), (3) they feel part of a Catalan community which participates or donates every year (56.95% - n=86) and, (4) they believe donating is a correct social behavior (36.42% - n=55). As it can be observed, overlapping answers were allowed for the participants; they could mark four possible motivations.

Graph 5: The four motivations to donate or participate to *La Marató de TV3* (N=151)¹¹.



¹¹ Of the 500 respondents only 151 people answered this question because only people who had donated a quantity of money or participate this last edition 2010 were able to answered it. Therefore, this low number of respondents was expected.

The audience's motivations to donate or participate have some similarities with the data obtained from the expert interviews, including community feeling, tradition of participation, and transparency of the project. Respondents were then asked to explain their main motivation in an open question. Here are examples taken from three respondents:

I think that it is important to participate in solidarity initiatives and more if they are Catalan initiatives!

La Marató de TV3 has become a benchmark of solidarity in Catalonia and for me it is already a tradition to make a donation each year, regardless of the disease concerned. At a time of crisis like the present initiatives like that are important for promoting medical research.

La Marató motivates me because the program is very educational since it explains the effects of unknown and common diseases. They show you the everyday-live of sick people and their personal experience with the sickness. Also it represents how they find motivations to continue forward.

As shown in respondents' own words, an important characteristic of the telethon is that it is educational; it explains the disease, what the effects are, what the consequences are, what can cause that disease, and other relevant aspects. This leads to a better understanding of how patients feel and live with the disease. To investigate this aspect, one question of the survey inquired whether respondents learned interesting information about the disease the telethon was about while watching the telethon. As a result, 75.29% (n=323) of the respondents respond that they learned new information, 20.28% (n=87) checked the option 'no opinion' and 4.43% (n=19) answered 'no'.

Another reason why *La Marató de TV3* achieves such success could be the community feeling as the experts have suggested. People celebrate this Catalan telethon as a community festival with every person as part of a big community that participates every year. Of respondents, 84.94% (n=327) feel proud to be part of the Catalan solidarity community, especially when it was announced that the 2010 edition held a new record of raising money, collecting a total of €8,735,103.

The issue of volunteerism is even more important to me. I think that it moves a lot of things in this country, and is basically a way of being of Catalan people.

It is a joy to collaborate on scientific research in an agile, secure and numerous ways, where the union of the Catalans creates strength to go ahead with useful projects and with a choice criterion.

It is an honour to be part of a country that is so supportive for noble causes.

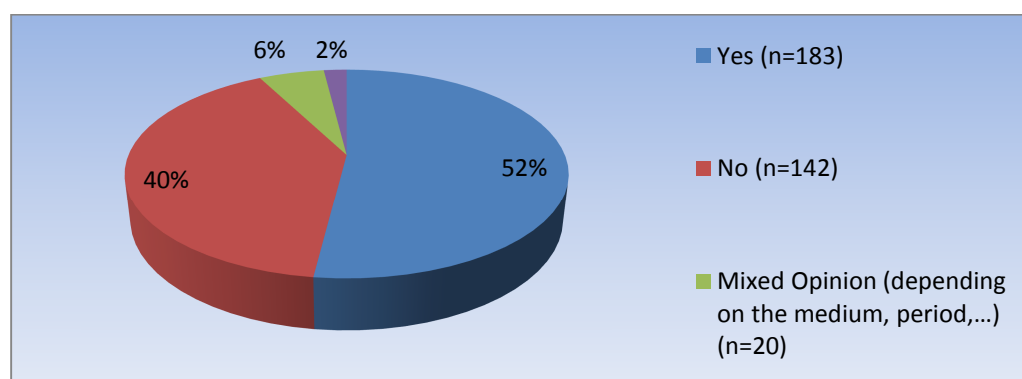
La Marató de TV3 is an institution in Catalonia. It treats diseases from a positive point of view, and despite that they show some particularly impactful cases and specially the patients who are involved, it moves you in a way that invites you to participate.

Of the respondents, 62.34% (n=250) participate or donate to *La Marató de TV3* independently of the kind of the disease the telethon is about. Therefore, people do not give money or participate to improve just one kind of disease, but they participate to improve the quality of life for sick people with different kinds of diseases. People are participating more to *La Marató de TV3's* project than to the specific disease that edition features. This means, as some experts point out, the tradition of participating in Catalonia is one of the success factors of that telethon.

So what are the main reasons why the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* collected the highest amount raised in the program's history? First, it is important to acknowledge that 'compassion fatigue' exists in our society as Tester (2001), Moeller (1999), Höijer (2004) and Cottle (2008) point out. Compassion fatigue is the idea that audiences have become "passive and desensitized to the repetitive shuffle of suffering and disaster" (Ong, 2008, p.3) that the media produces. This compassion is related to the public compassion that Tester (2001) acknowledges, and not the compassion notion that Mèlich describes as an intimate relationship between two people. Therefore, compassion fatigue is "about public compassion" (Tester, 2001, p.19), and so in this context compassion can be produced by the media.

The question is, then, do Catalan citizens have the compassion fatigue that Moeller (1999), Tester (2001) and Cottle (2008) explain? In the online survey, respondents were asked to answer an open question on if they consider that disasters, crisis and suffering of other people appear too much in the news or in the media in general. Such overexposure is often referred to as the key determinant of compassion fatigue (Moeller, 1999; Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008). Graph 6 displays the results. According to the data, 52% (n=183) of respondents answered 'yes,' 40% (n=142), checked 'no,' and 6% (n=20) answered with a mixed opinion depending on the medium, the period, and how the medium displays the news, and 2% (n=7) answered 'without opinion.' The respondents who believe that the media does not cause an oversaturation of suffering images is because they consider these types of images important to be aware of.

Graph 6: The compassion Fatigue thesis; "do people think there is too much suffering, disasters and crisis on the media?" (N=353).



Some of the responses related to the 'compassion fatigue' thesis point out that there is too much sensationalism or journalism of attachment in the media, but TV3 or *La Marató de TV3* does not fall into that category since they are much more based on rational and neutral information. One of the respondents explains,

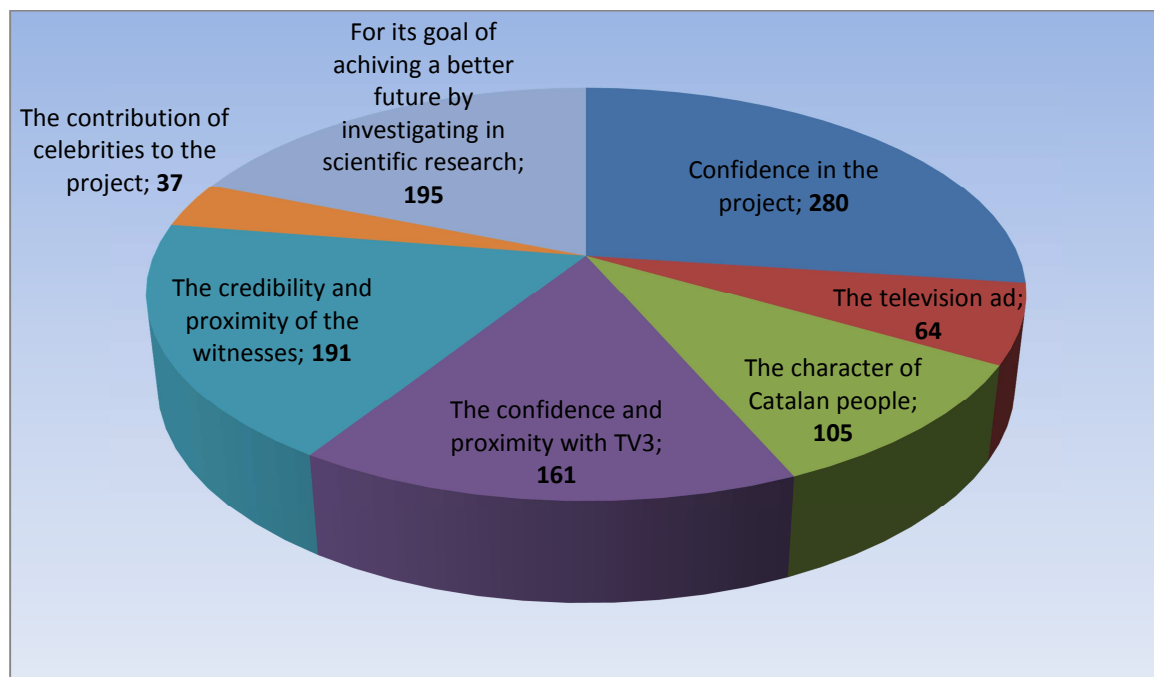
I think disasters and images of suffering appear too often in the media, and not as a constructive way. They are products, news that the media uses to attract our attention and our time, what for them is share. From here I would like to exclude TV3 and *La Marató* that they are an exception in this case.

TV3 is the main television channel that respondents regularly watch (69.43%; n=243). This element is related to one of the motivations of donating or participating on the Catalan telethon. One respondent states,

The motivation to help the investigation of diseases enhanced by the quality of the program, which aims to give testimonials but avoiding the sensationalism that often, is the main reason why people collaborate in solidarity projects.

It is important to know what the success factors of *La Marató de TV3* are, according to the audience. The respondents had to mark four of eleven reasons they believe are the reason why *La Marató de TV3* 2010 has collected €8,735,103, even though there is a financial crisis in Spain and potential 'compassion fatigue' (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008).

Graph 7: The main success factors of *La Marató de TV3* (N=385).



The most common reasons for the telethon's success are that (1) there is confidence in the project and the utility of the collected money (72.73%, n=280), (2) audiences admire the telethon's goal to achieve a better future by using the scientific research (50.65%, n=195), (3) audiences view the project as credible and the proximity of the witnesses to the citizens is close (49.61%, n=191), (4) the confidence that the Catalans have with TV3 (41.82%, n=161), (5) the sense of community people who participate/donate feel every year they participate (34.55%, n=133), and (6) because it is a solidarity celebration (30.91%, n=119).

In sum, the main reason why people participate and donate so much to *La Marató de TV3* is not because of the compassionate or sensitivity feeling they feel while watching images of sick people during the program, but for the community feeling (34.55%, n=133) and the proximity the program and TV3 have with the Catalan people (49.61%, n=191). These elements generate a better identification between the audience and the witnesses. Therefore, H3 is proven. There are also more, however less common, reasons why *La Marató de TV3* achieves success including, (1) confidence with the project, (2) transparency of the money process, (3) the credibility of the witnesses, and (4) the confidence on TV3 and its proximity.

4.2.4 The Particular Case of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*'s Spot (H4)

A considerable amount of respondents remember the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*'s television spot. Some expert interviewees considered this spot as one of the driving success factors of the 2010 edition of *La Marató de TV3*. Respondents describe particular moments in the spot, the case of the father and the son, the story of the marathons they are doing, or the song featured by Montserrat Caballé and her daughter. Two respondents describe the spot as the following,

Dick Hoyt accompanies some endurance races his son Rick, who has spastic quadriplegia with cerebral palsy. I think the spot touched the hearts of all Catalans!

I am convinced that the effect punch of the 2010 Marató has been the spot. The images and the music had a high emotional content, especially because it is evoked of the parent-child relationship.

During the survey, respondents watched the spot and were then asked to answer a few questions about what they think and feel about it. According to the date, 93.23% (n=358) felt emotions after watching the spot, and 89.58% (n=344) of respondents believe that this television spot is able to activate the audience to participate or donate to *La Marató de TV3*. Moreover, 62.50% (n=240) were willing to imagine themselves in the witnesses situation, thus they felt empathy regarding the protagonists of the television advertisement.

All these results support the notion that the spot is one of the main success factors of the 2010 Catalan telethon, which activated the audience to donate and participate days before the airing of the television program. It did this by making the telethon a topic of conversation, and by providing a sneak peak enabling people to look forward to watching the telethon. This spot did not feature sick Catalan citizens, diffusing a different strong point of the telethon, proximity. Therefore, this explains that proximity is outweighed by the credibility of the program.

Furthermore, as previously explained, the most common success factor of the Catalan telethon, according to respondents, is the confidence that the project will make efficient use of the collected money in terms of scientific research (72.73%; n= 280). Also, 69.54% (n=105) of respondents who

participated or donated to the 2010 edition of *La Marató de TV3* responded that one of their main motivations to donate or participate was the trust that the money would be used wisely. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, ‘*The carefully built up credibility of the project La Marató de TV3 among its audiences is a key element in its current success*’ is proven.

The two variables that are analyzed in the next cross tabulation are the sensitivity of the respondents while watching the advertisement, and their opinion on if this ad could activate the audience to participate or donate to *La Marató de TV3* (see cross tabulation 6). This relationship has significant results since the significance of the Chi-square value is 0.000 and the degrees of freedom are 2; 95.6% (n=328) of respondents who felt sensitive after watching the spot consider that this spot can help to activate the audience to donate or participate, while only 4.4% (n=15) of the respondents who did not feel sensitive thought that this spot could help to activate the audience. Therefore, the sensitive feeling that this spot transmits to the audience is a willingness to encourage them to participate or donate to *La Marató de TV3*.

Cross Tabulation 6: Sensitivity while watching the spot of *La Marató de TV3* – Audience activation with the spot 2010 (N=384) (p=0.000).

		The spot activates the audience			Total
		Yes	No	Without Opinion	
Feeling sensitive with the spot	Yes	329	9	20	358
	% Feeling sensitive with the spot	91,9%	2,5%	5,6%	100,0%
	% The spot activates the audience	95,6%	60,0%	80,0%	93,2%
	No	15	6	5	26
	% Feeling sensitive with the spot	57,7%	23,1%	19,2%	100,0%
	% The spot activates the audience	4,4%	40,0%	20,0%	6,8%
Total		344	15	25	384
	% Feeling sensitive with the spot	89,6%	3,9%	6,5%	100,0%
	% The spot activates the audience	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

4.3 The Document Analysis

In addition to the interviews and the online survey, a document analysis between the audience’s curve, the number of calls received each hour of the 16-hour program, and the script of the 2010 *La*

Marató de TV3 was conducted (see Appendices). By doing this, it is possible to see which images received more audience responses and donations during the telethon. This document analysis is used only to answer the second hypothesis (**H2**), *In telethons, particularly in La Marató de TV3 2010, there exists a relationship between (1) the harsh or graphic images of sick children by which the audience perceives their suffering presented by personal accounts from individuals and their families, (2) the audience's emotionality (feelings of compassion, empathy or pity), and (3) the willingness to donate and to participate during a telethon.*

By analyzing the audience's curve during the 16 hours 2010 *La Marató de TV3* (see appendix A), three main moments can be observed where the percentage of viewers is the highest, around 15.00-15.30, around 21.00-21.30, and around 23.00. Of these times, 15.00 and 21.00 are the only moments that *La Marató* is interrupted for the news program (*TN-Telenotícies*), according to the script of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*.¹² In those moments, before and after the *Telenotícies* program, is when the telethon achieves the highest amount of viewers, which is approximately 26-29% of share as the audience's curve shows.

The moment that the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* presented the harshest case featuring a witness named Marina occurred directly after the evening edition of the *Telenotícies* program, around 21.30. In that moment, the highest amount of viewers is watching the telethon. This moment is when the telethon aims to achieve as many as donations as possible, since this is the only time during its broadcast it achieves this many audience members. By presenting a child sufferer, the program achieves a high contribution of donations. This increase in donations is indicated by the increase in the number of calls in this particular moment of the 16-hour program (see table 2).

The table below illustrates two important factors. The first is the comparison of the number of calls between the 2009 and the 2010 editions of *La Marató de TV3* for each hour of the program. The second is the evolution of the calls number for each hour during the Catalan telethon 2010. In this evolution, it is possible to observe the increases and decreases in the number of calls. One interesting fact is that there is an increase of calls between the 2009 and the 2010 edition, from 109.605 calls to 125.439 calls. Therefore, the obtained donations between both editions were also different. The 2010 total was also higher than expected; the 2009 edition raised €7,120,569, while the 2010 edition raised €8.735.103.

Secondly, Table 2 displays the increases and decreases of the calls during the 2010 edition per hour. Around 20.00-21.00 the calls increase from 8,058 to 16,475 calls. Then between 21.00 and 22.00

¹² This document can be not shown as it is a confidential document of TV3.

there were 13,158 calls. This was the moment when the harsh case of Marina was presented. As a consequence, between 22.00 and 23.00 the number of calls increases to 45,374 in an hour.

Table 2: Call's numbers of the 2009 and 2010 editions of *La Marató de TV3*.

Time (Hour)	Calls (2009) 905111213	Calls (2010) 905155050	Difference between 2010- 2009
	Total		
09-10	144	160	16
10-11	2.081	2.947	866
11-12	1.691	2.345	654
12-13	1.669	2.364	695
13-14	2.181	2.128	-53
14-15	1.225	1.510	285
15-16	3.392	2.214	-1.178
16-17	5.001	5.301	300
17-18	3.850	3.363	-487
18-19	5.485	5.335	-150
19-20	7.833	8.058	225
20-21	10.516	16.475	5.959
21-22	13.949	13.159	-790
22-23	40.679	45.374	4.695
23-24	7.152	10.266	3.114
00-01	2.724	3.935	1.211
01-02	33	505	472
TOTAL	109.605	125.439	15.834

These results approve the H2 because harsh images of a child can produce an increase in calls and therefore, an increase in donations from the audience. In *La Marató de TV3* 2010 there is a relationship between the harsh images of sick children and the willingness to donate and to participate during the telethon.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Media studies and philosophy are two distinct fields of academic research; however in this study these two research disciplines are studied together to understand the social impulse that produce participation and donations in telethons. The Catalan telethon *La Marató de TV3* has been researched by conducting a multi-methodological study which evaluates the producers of the telethon (encoding) as well as the audience (decoding) (Hall, 1980). This particular telethon was chosen because it receives the most donations every year in Spain. Previous theory and this research provide answers to the main research question of this master thesis. The main research question is:

What are the success factors of La Marató de TV3 during a time when ‘compassion fatigue’ is known to exist (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008) along with a financial crisis in Spain?

As Tester (2001) explains, “compassion fatigue means becoming so used to the spectacle of dreadful events, misery or suffering that we stop noticing them” (p.13). By conducting an online survey with the Catalan citizens (n=500) it was possible to observe that 52% of the audience feels compassion fatigue as a result of an excessive content displaying suffering in the media. The majority of the audience is no longer sensitive to disasters, the suffering of people, and the crises around the world. As one respondent of the survey responded, “Yes, there are too many images of suffering in different mediums, which results in the images losing their effect; they do not touch or shock us anymore.” Moreover, there is a financial crisis¹³ in Spain with a 20.7% unemployment rate.¹⁴ As one respondent explained, “Catalonia is a country of solidarity, and through *La Marató de TV3* this can be confirmed every year. Despite the financial crisis people give a bit or a lot and that all counts up to a substantial result.”

During this time when both a ‘compassion fatigue’ (Tester, 2001; Cottle, 2008) and a financial crisis in Spain are known to exist, it seems unlikely that a telethon, the purpose of which is to achieve donations and participation from the population, can be successful. However, the telethon *La Marató de TV3* has achieved the highest amount raised in the program’s history during the most recent edition in December 2010, raising €8,735,103. Therefore, what are the success factors of *La Marató de TV3* that produce a high number of donations and participation of Catalan citizens?

As argued in both the theoretical and methodological frameworks, when people are watching images of suffering in the media or in telethons they may experience sensitive feelings such as compassion,

¹³ http://www.elpais.com/graficos/economia/crisis/economica/Espana/elggraeco/20080903elpepueco_1/Ges/

¹⁴ http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=z8o7pt6rd5uqa6_&ctype=l&strail=f#ctype=l&strail=false&nسلم=h&met_y=unemployment_rate&fdim_y=seasonality:sa&scale_y=lin&ind_y=false&rdim=country_group&idim=country_group:eu:non-eu&idim=country:es&hl=nl&dl=nl

pity, or identification with the sufferer by feeling empathy (Chouliaraki, 2008a & 2006a; Höijer, 2004).

Höijer (2004) and Chouliaraki (2006b) understand compassion as a public feeling that people have when they are aware of the suffering of people by the media. Mèlich (2010), however, one of the expert interviewees of this study, argues that people cannot have compassion via the media since the media are public and compassion is an intimate occurrence between two people. Therefore, according to Mèlich, the Catalan spectators of the 2010 *La Marató de TV3* did not experience feelings of compassion because the television program is public; thus, they were experiencing pity (87.47%, n=314) and empathy (60.17%, n=216), as observed in the responses of the online survey.

The previous three sensitive feelings - compassion, pity and empathy - are expressed in a variety of ways depending on each person (Höijer, 2004). There is a gender-focused meaning of compassion in which women need more emotional arguments while men need much more rational arguments to donate or help people in need (Dyck & Coldevin, 1992; Tester, 2001). By conducting a cross tabulation that relates gender with participation and donation, it can be concluded that women have more willingness to donate than men after watching the emotional images of the suffering of Marina and her mother.

Since the case study *La Marató de TV3* is no longer focused on compassion (Mèlich, 2010), this gender-focused meaning will focus on feelings of pity and empathy. By conducting cross tabulations of different variables with gender, it cannot be concluded that women feel more emotion or sensitivity while watching *La Marató de TV3*, feel more pity for a child sufferer, or empathize more with the sufferers than men since the Chi-square tests determinate that there is not a difference between those variables, and therefore, the cross tabulations did not produce significant results.

As expected, the moment that this Catalan telethon broadcasts cases that are particularly impactful, for example harsh images of a child with a disease, there is a reaction from the audience in terms of emotionality such as feelings of empathy and pity, which produce a willingness to donate or to participate during the telethon. The number of calls and the number of donations increase rapidly. As Chouliaraki (2006a) and Silverstone (2007) point out, the representation of images of suffering stimulates emotions and a willingness to take action amongst the viewers. If said images are representations of children suffering, the attention, emotions and donations of the audience are easier to get (Tester, 2001; Höijer, 2004). According to the responses of the Catalan audience, 88.9% (n=272) of respondents who felt pity for a five-year old child called Marina had a willingness to donate or participate on the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*.

On the other hand, sensitive feelings such as empathy or pity that the audience may have while watching harsh images of other people's suffering is not the only reason why *La Marató de TV3* achieves an abundant number of donations. Tester (2001) explains that the representation of suffering by the media has not always moved the viewer to feel compassion or in this case, pity or empathy, since these feelings are not automatic responses to media consumption (Kyriakidou, 2008); there are people who donate or participate without having pity or empathy or without even watching the program; there are even people who donate before any of the images are broadcast (23.18%, n=35) or after the images have left the screen (16.56%, n=25). According to the survey, 63.58% (n=96) of the respondents actually donate *during* the program.

The reasons why *La Marató de TV3* is so popular, and achieves a significant amount of donations and participations every year are various. After analyzing the interviews, survey's responses and conducting the document analysis, the main reasons why this Catalan telethon achieves such popularity, donations, and participations from the audience are the following:

1) The project of this telethon is solid and consolidated: *La Marató de TV3* has the purpose to raise funds for scientific research into currently incurable diseases. Its aim is communicated by the television channel TV3, by promotions in regional newspapers and magazines of Catalonia, by radio advertisements, by the telethon's website, and during the telethon program. As a consequence, the majority of people around Catalonia are aware of what *La Marató de TV3* is, its purpose, and the day that the telethon is broadcast.

Also, the strength of the project is based on the fact that it has been about scientific research from the beginning. The majority of the respondents (83.44%, n=126) noted that it is important to do scientific research to achieve a better future as one of the main motivations for people to donate or participate to the 2010 *La Marató de TV3*. This can be explained by the fact that people who donate like to have the feeling they are donating according to good, rational, and logical reasons (Tester, 2001). Audiences receive telethons more easily as a logical argument rather than an emotive one (Dyck & Coldevin, 1992). Also, the entertainment feature of this kind of television program does not emphasize the images of suffering (Tester, 2001), which avoids or reduces compassion fatigue. A positive image, such as people singing and having fun, commonly has more favorable effects on donations than a negative image, such as a child crying (Dyck & Coldevin, 1992). These are reasons that support the idea that this telethon is solid and well established in Catalonia because it is based on rationality, objectivity, and entertainment.

2) The identification between the viewer and the witness is well-established: One of the features of *La Marató de TV3* is that it is based on a different incurable disease every year. This is done in order

to have a varied representation of cases and witnesses, which leads to a better identification between the viewer who is at home watching the telethon and the witness who is at the program explaining his/her personal experience with that disease. On the other hand, the Catalan telethon believes that the witnesses should be as representative as possible, for example, by having testimonials from all four provinces of Catalonia and not only from Barcelona, the most populated one. All the witnesses are people who live and work in Catalonia; this produces an easier identification between the viewer and the witness. This is related to the 'compassion filter' concept of Williams (2008), which means that compassion, pity, or empathy is limited to cases in which the self sees the other who suffers as similar.

Therefore, the proximity between the viewers and the witnesses of *La Marató de TV3* is what makes a well-established identification, and thus the viewer is able to imagine himself/herself in the situation of the witness by having empathy (Torralba, 2010). The proper distance (Chouliaraki, 2006a; Silverstone, 2007) that television creates between viewer and sufferer generates a sense of responsibility for the other. Because this relationship between the spectator and the first-hand ordinary witness is well established, the spectator has an emotive reaction and acts consequently in a variety of ways to care and reduce the suffering of the other (Chouliaraki, 2008a & 2010; Turner, 2010). However, it also presents objective information that allows spectators to evaluate if the suffering is worthy of their response, such as donating or participating in the telethon (Boltanski, 1999).

3) People have confidence and belief in the project: The Catalan audience of *La Marató de TV3* believe that the money they give to the telethon will be used for scientific research, which is one of the main reasons (69.54%, n=105) why they donate or participate. The experts of that telethon, Abad and Basté, also agree that one of the success factors is the telethon's transparency. For example, they insist that the whole process of the solidarity project is transparent up to the transmission of the money to fund research, making it as public as possible. This telethon explains each part of its process to ensure credibility regarding the project and the cause. Therefore, the carefully built up credibility of the project *La Marató de TV3* is the reason why even though proximity between viewer and sufferer was reduced in the 2010 version, as the telethon focused on people from the USA rather than Catalonia, the telethon still raised the highest amount of donations in the program's history.

4) Catalan people have confidence and experience proximity with the channel TV3: The television channel TV3 that annually broadcasts *La Marató de TV3* is a key factor of the telethon's success. As Checa, one of the expert interviewees of this study, explains, TV3 is a paradigm of proximity and confidence and it is also the main television channel that the survey respondents watch (69.43%,

n=243). Catalan people feel close to that television channel and this proximity translates to confidence in the contents that it broadcasts. This proximity is based on different factors: the language, the geography, the culture, etc. In general, in Catalonia TV3 is considered the Catalan people's channel.

Bourdieu (1998) makes a distinction between mediums depending on its values of "objectivity;" the journalist is divided between objectivity and human attachment (Tester, 2001). An interesting aspect to point out here is the fact that some responses of the open question in the survey related to 'compassion fatigue' explained that too much journalism of attachment exists in general, but they exclude TV3 and *La Marató de TV3* from that since they consider this program to be based on neutral and objective information. If the objective journalistic practice would turn to journalism of attachment, then compassion fatigue would also emerge (Tester, 2001; Moeller, 1999). Therefore, the fact that Catalan people consider TV3 as a rational channel and not a sensationalist one may be the reason why 40% of the respondents answered that they don't believe there are too many images of suffering, disaster, and crisis in the media, and that if this is the reality, it should be broadcast using rational information and not be based on sensationalism. According to them, this is what TV3 does. These opinions may approve the point of some authors regarding the relationship between the interpretation and acceptance of media content, and the audience's social class position, lifestyle, and cultural background (Morley, 1992; Kyriakidou, 2008; Kuipers & de Kloet, 2009; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

5) The Catalan Community Feeling: This solidarity project is a project of Catalonia, a social phenomenon, and a celebration day, as the interviewees point out. Catalans (84.94%, n=327) feel proud to be part of the Catalan community that achieves such high donations and participation to help other people and to create a better future. Also, one of the main reasons why they participate or donate is because they feel part of a Catalan community that participates or donates every year (56.95%, n=86). By participating or donating, people experience a positive community feeling. Catalans feel that this telethon is a common project and not an individual one.

La Marató de TV3 can be only understood when two factors converge: "the country, with people that have a way of doing and being, who demonstrate things very discreetly but very effectively too [...] and then, the pride of country, the pride of the community you belong to, and showing this pride with actions" (Checa). This community does not need to be defined in relation to geographical territories or social variables (Williams, 2008), and it can only exist when moral values exist among citizens (Schopenhauer, 1995). By having compassion or other feelings regarding another's well-being, community can emerge (Williams, 2008). "Differences of region, economy, or accent are

subordinated to the inclusiveness of a national community which is able evidently to be compassionate when given the opportunity” (Tester, 2001, p.120). This includes telethons, a project aimed at uniting a community to raise money to help people in need (Smit, 2003). This is what *La Marató de TV3* is achieving, a Catalan community that remains engaged and supportive year after year.

All in all, it is safe to conclude that these five success factors of *La Marató de TV3* may be applicable to other telethons. However, this approach is definitely far less straightforward and more complex than one would initially attribute it. Practical limitations have caused this study to be limited to one telethon. A comparative analysis of other telethons in this case could be interesting. We would suggest to cover some characteristics of one Spanish telethon, to study the difference and the reason why is one more successful than another. For instance, as we have chosen not to compare differences in telethons across different countries, this might provide interesting parallels between production with references to the content and audience’s interpretations, and reactions across nations. In this context, other success factors could exist.

To conclude, in addition to the literature on telethons and the mediated representation of suffering, this study demonstrates that pity, empathy, or compassion is not, as could be expected from previous studies, the key determinant for the success of a telethon. Instead, we find five other factors in the case of *La Marató de TV3*, (1) consolidated project, (2) identification between the viewer-witnesses is well established, (3) confidence in the project, (4) proximity to TV3 and (5) the Catalan community feeling. Therefore, although it seems necessary in telethons to produce some harsh images of suffering to activate the audience and achieve donations and participations, this study has revealed that five alternative reasons can be as important and effective in a telethon’s success.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix B: In-depth Interviews

The General Interview Guide

La Marató de TV3

- Quina és exactament la teva feina en relació amb La Marató de TV3?
- Quant temps fa que treballes per La Marató?
- Em podries explicar què és la Marató de TV3?
- A part de l'objectiu clar d'aconseguir recursos econòmics per a la investigació científica de malalties actualment incurables, té un objectiu formatiu?
- Quins són els factors principals pels quals creus que La Marató de TV3 aconsegueix un nivell tant alt de participacions i donacions per part de l'audiència?
- De quina manera creus que La Marató de TV3 es diferencia d'altres maratons televisives, en relació als continguts del programa, per exemple de la *Kerry Lewis* d'EEUU o la *Fundación Inocente Inocente* de Antena 3?
- Un dels trets característics del programa és el fet que aconsegueix apropar els espectadors amb persones desconegudes malaltes. Com ho aconseguiu?
- La tria de totes les persones que participen en el programa (testimonis, científics, presentador, famosos, etc.) té alguna relació amb la possible proximitat a la identitat catalana? És a dir, creus que la identitat catalana hi juga algun paper en la identificació dels espectadors amb el malalt?
- Es té en compte el prototip de la víctima ideal estudiat per investigadors acadèmics, la qual acostuma a ser un nen o una dona?
- De quina manera s'escullen els testimonis que s'utilitzen en el programa?
- Quin paper principal tenen els famosos dins del programa? I els científics?

Compassió

- Compassió significa acompanya a l'altre i identificar-se amb el patiment de l'altre. Tal i com explica el Francesc Torralba: "La compassió és la vivència interior del sofriment de l'altre". El principal objectiu del programa és obtenir recursos econòmics per a la investigació científica de malalties actualment incurables. Creus que seria possible aconseguir aquest objectiu sense produir compassió a l'audiència?
- De quina manera intenteu produir compassió a l'audiència, és a dir, que es puguin posar a través de la imaginació a la pell del malalt?
- Explica'm com tracteu el tema de la compassió. Teniu assessors, psicòlegs o filòsofs que us expliquin i ajudin en com tractar el tema de la compassió i/o el tema de la solidaritat?
- Alguns estudis acadèmics expliquen que actualment a la societat existeix una fatiga de compassió, la qual significa que la gent està cansada de veure tantes i tantes imatges de patiment d'altres persones representades pels mitjans de comunicació, de quina manera La Marató de TV3 supera aquet possible sentiment de la societat i segueix obtenint tants alts nivells de donacions?

Telemaratons

- Tenint en compte la teva experiència en el món de telemaratons, has notat durant el temps canvis importants en com es representa el patiment de malalts o en com s'organitza una marató televisiva?

[Following the discussion with each interviewee we came up with other aspects that will be explained now. This is what the semi-structured interviews allow to do.]

Interview Guide - Carme Basté

La Fundació de La Marató de TV3

- L'any 1992 es crea la Marató de TV3 i el 1996 la Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals creen la Fundació de la Marató. Com definiries la Fundació de La Marató de TV3? Quin objectiu principal té?
- Com a directora de la qual, de quina manera es proporciona un procediment transparent de cara als ciutadans catalans?
- Una de les funcions de la Fundació és ser un nexa entre la ciutadania i La Marató de TV3. De quina manera aconseguíu aquest connexió?
- Com s'aconsegueix moure tot el voluntariat que mou La Marató previ al programa?
- Creus que seria possible aconseguir tants fons econòmics sense els mitjans de comunicació? Quin paper hi juguen en aquest procés?

Internet i elements interactius

- Una de les novetats d'aquesta última edició de La Marató 2010 va ser la gran quantitat de fans que va arribar a tenir La Marató al Facebook. No només amics però també les aportacions que l'audiència escrivia en el mur de la Marató. Aquestes noves tecnologies i noves plataformes dels mitjans ajuden a promoure una interactivitat. Creus que això beneficia també el programa i el nombre de participants o donacions?

Interview Guide - Xavier Abad

Els continguts

- Quina estructura segueix més o menys el programa?

La tria del presentador, testimonis, científics i famosos

- Quin paper principal tenen els famosos dins del programa?
- I quin paper tenen els científics que també hi participen?

La participació de l'audiència, interactivitat

- Una de les novetats d'aquesta última edició de La Marató 2010 va ser la gran quantitat de fans que va arribar a tenir La Marató al Facebook. No només amics però també les aportacions que l'audiència escrivia en el mur de la Marató. Aquestes noves tecnologies i noves plataformes dels mitjans ajuden a promoure una interactivitat. Creus que això beneficia també el programa i el nombre de participants o donacions en el programa?
- Consideres La Marató de TV3 una marató televisiva que té en compte i aprofita les noves tecnologies així com la màxima interactivitat i feedback per part de l'audiència?

Interview Guide - Carles Checa

Campanya de sensibilització

- Quin funció principal té la campanya sensitiva que es transmet prèviament al programa?
- En quin moment previ al programa es publica la campanya de sensibilització gràfica i audiovisual?

- Quines són les indicacions que rebeu de TV3 per fer la campanya gràfica i audiovisual?
- Teniu en compte que l'audiència té reaccions i respostes diverses davant imatges de patiment? Com ho teniu en compte?
- Quina lectura busqueu en la producció de la campanya per part de l'audiència?
- Creus que la campanya de sensibilització ha estat un factor clau per l'èxit de La Marató?

Compassió, identificació amb el malalt

- Quan i com dueu a terme la selecció dels models humans dels anuncis?
- Molts estudis han demostrat que una de les maneres més eficients en que una persona participi o faci donatius en maratons televisives és a través de la identificació del malalt, és a dir, tenint compassió pel malalt. De quina manera intenteu que el públic es pugui identificar amb els malalts de les imatges de la campanya?

Solidaritat

- Què creus que és el que provoca l'activació de l'esperit solidari i de participació a La Marató dels catalans?
- Tal i com ha dit la directora de la Fundació de La Marató, Carme Basté, "la campanya de sensibilització és la que veritablement escalfa cors i activa motors perquè l'audiència rebi el programa especialment motivat". Com aconseguiu això?

Interview Guide - Joan-Carles Mèlich

Compassió

- Em podries definir compassió breument?
- Moltes vegades es consideren sinònims els termes compassió, empatia, simpatia, tenir llàstima. Com diferenciaries aquests termes de compassió?
- Avui en dia, de vegades quan parlem de compassió ens sembla que sigui un terme negatiu/antiquat/religiós, es pot considerar compassió com a negatiu o com a positiu?
- Alguns estudis acadèmics expliquen que actualment a la societat existeix una fatiga de compassió, la qual significa que la gent està cansada de veure tantes i tantes imatges de patiment d'altres persones representades pels mitjans de comunicació, de quina manera es podria no caure en aquesta fatiga de compassió?
- Creus que la fatiga de compassió ha sigut causada pels mitjans? Abans quan no hi havia televisió deuria passar el mateix?
- Consideres que la gent pot tenir el sentiment de compassió sense la representació del patiment de l'altre a través dels mitjans de comunicació? Sense els mitjans la compassió seria tan important com és actualment?
- De quina manera s'aconsegueix la compassió? De quines maneres et pots identificar amb una altra persona?
- Quin paper hi juga la imaginació en la compassió?
- Alguna vegada es comenta que la compassió és una actitud egoista, perquè s'ajuda a l'altre per sentir-se bé en un mateix. Em podries explicar aquesta situació? Es pot saber en quin moment algú realment sent compassió o ajuda a l'altre per interessos propis?
- Documentant-me he trobat una cita teva que diu "l'ètica és una relació compassiva, una resposta al dolor de l'altre", per tant, sense dolor no seria possible la compassió?

Maratons Televisives

- Consideres que la Marató de TV3 o les telemaratons en general creen compassió a l'audiència d'alguna manera?

- Creus que les telemaratons solidàries aconseguirien tanta participació i/o donacions sense la imatge de sofriment de malalts, en la qual l'audiència s'hi identifica i es posa a la pell de l'altre, és a dir, sense produir compassió?
- Consideres que la compassió és un dels motors que activen a les persones a ajudar a altres persones desinteressadament? O hi ha també altres ressorts que fan això?
- Existeixen diferents tipus de compassió?
- Consideres que hi ha alguna altre cosa més important que la compassió que justifica la participació en l'ajuda de l'altre?