

Niina Meriläinen

Understanding the Framing of Issues in Multi-Actor Arenas

Power Relations in the Human Rights Debate



JYVÄSKYLÄ STUDIES IN HUMANITIES 238

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ABSTRACT

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This PhD thesis focuses on strategic use of framing in the multi-actor debate on human rights to create issue salience. The research results add to the understanding of the strategic choices made by actors in agenda setting and framing related to power relations in issue arenas. The results come together in a conceptual model of the framing processes involved.

The results of this PhD thesis show how actors debate and make decisions concerning their communication. Actors can belong to multiple networks and discuss in various issue arenas, and additionally not all actors interact in the same issue arenas. Competition may arise concerning causal relations as well as on how and in what context issues are debated and by whom, which consequently creates power relations, making some actors gatekeepers and some less central in the interaction.

Human rights issues are seen as important and universal. However, this is not the reality in the issue arenas influenced by selectiveness and power relations. What this research tells us is that, by using strategic framing in the communication, central actors can selectively push human rights issues and frames to the debate and create different causal relations between issues and actors.

By illustrating how framing is used as a tool in enhancing salience and creating a context of causal relations, this PhD thesis adds to the transparency of the human rights debate and, in particular, casts light on the processes of issue selection and framing. By opening up the human rights debate, the selective nature of issue debates is explained. With more transparency, all actors will be better equipped to participate in the debate, thereby benefiting the problem solving of human rights issues.

Keywords: human rights, issue arenas, power relations, framing.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Not all issues that should be discussed, are.

In the debate on human rights issues, multiple actors participate. Actors in this research refer to anyone who participates or aims to participate in the debate on issues in issue arenas. Actors can be individual people but also organizations such as multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), states or parliaments, and multistate actors such as the EU and UN. In the empirical studies for this PhD research, Amnesty International (Amnesty) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) are used as examples of NGOs and the European Parliament (EP) as an example of more traditional political actors to illustrate the theoretical framework developed in an empirical setting.

The interplay among the actors adds to the complexity of the issues. Some actors function as gatekeepers. These powerful gatekeepers are more able to set the agenda and, as a consequence, the debate may follow the agenda setting and framing of the gatekeepers. Thus, important alternative viewpoints and issues which influence the course of the debate and subsequent decision making may be missing, making the processes of agenda setting and decision making less transparent.

Human rights are often discussed from the perspective of law or political science. This thesis takes a different perspective. It aims to contribute to the literature on issue arenas by investigating how strategic framing is used to increase issue salience in issue arenas as part of power relations between actors. In particular, it seeks to enhance the understanding of how framing is used as a strategic tool in multi-actor human rights debate.

The thesis departs from the notion that multiple actors debate on issue arenas and form networks (Vos, Schoemaker and Luoma-aho, 2014). These actors use framing simultaneously in debates on various issues arenas. As a consequence, actors may focus on a different set of issues and emphasize different aspects of issues and actors by consciously or unconsciously applying framing. The concept of issue refers to how a topic is seen and discussed by actors. As Coombs (2002: 215) said, "A problem becomes an issue when it moves from a

private concern to a publicly discussed concern". According to Hallahan (2001: 28), "issues are social constructions that can exist independently of the verifiable conditions on which they are based". Issues are discussed in issue arenas that are real or virtual platforms (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010: 11), such as parliaments, social media and organizational boardrooms. Thus, social media and the Internet have also become a relevant platform for human rights debate. Social media create opportunities to connect grassroots and decision makers, spread information, connect various groups on important social issues that may lack attention in the traditional mainstream media, though this in itself does not promise political change (Meriläinen and Vos, 2010; DeLuca, Lawson and Sun, 2012: 501).

Actors and issues compete for attention. Therefore "rival activism" is also found in civil society, as Bob (2012) claims. Many actors believe that "their goals are in the public interest" (Bob, 2012: 198), and all actor networks are embedded in their own values. Actors strive to make their points-of-view the dominant ones in society. Actors can also highlight a causal relation as the context of an event or issue. When multiple actors strive to frame issues and stress different causal relations favoured from their perspective, consensus may not be found. In issue arenas, each actor observes the other actors in what they are doing, turning the debate into a competition for issue and actor salience, power as well as position in the actor networks. This PhD thesis research focuses on debate in competitive issue arenas and power relations in the debate. The research aims are presented next.

1.1 Research aims

This thesis focuses on the notion that framing is used in the process of constructing issue salience. The overall purpose of this research is two-fold:

- First, to contribute to theory development concerning multi-actor-debate in issue arenas
- Second, to contribute to the transparency of the human rights debate.

The principal aim of the PhD thesis is to enhance the understanding, from a constructionist approach, of how framing is used as a strategic tool to create issue salience in human rights issues, and how this contributes to power relations in the actor networks involved. In earlier research less multidisciplinary attention has been given to the notion that framing can be used as a strategic tool in the debate and consequently in power relations between actors over social issues such as human rights. Power relations have been investigated, but the strategic side and dynamic nature of the debate and the related power relations have not been addressed thoroughly in a multidisciplinary manner in re-

search. Human rights and power relations have been studied but predominantly from the perspective of law or political science. Thus a broader outlook on the issue and the development of broader multidisciplinary theory is still largely missing. The limited one-disciplinary approach does not support a wider understanding of this complex research topic.

This research provides a fresh multidisciplinary theoretical approach of how actors behave in issue arena debates and make strategic choices with the use of framing and provides a new outlook to the debate over social issues. Also, this study adds to the understanding that consensus over causal relations or preferable actions may not be found. The perspective of causal relations brings a new viewpoint to the study of human rights debate contexts, as it explains how causal scenarios can be formed by utilizing strategic framing in the interaction when reacting to and anticipating actions of other actors and how this further influences the power relations between actors.

Various actors may have a different understanding of which issues and frames should be regarded as salient and in what contexts the debate should occur. In the multi-actor debate a consensus over legitimate actors may additionally be missing. Because of these aspects, power becomes a key issue in the issue arena debates and it characterizes the network relations. The thesis presents a qualitative multidisciplinary model of the process, describing how salience in these issues is created by actors in multi-actor issue arena debate. During the various stages of the research attention was paid to strategic framing choices by actors in communication that may turn issue arena debates and the subsequent final decision making process into competition of power positions.

Illustrating how framing is used as a tool in creating salience, and how issues and frames may be selected to further a certain goal, this research aims to create transparency, focusing primarily on the first stage of issue arena debate, the agenda setting stage, which is followed by the debate itself and the final decision making process. In this research transparency refers to opening up the strategic side of the debates. This goes beyond the narrow definition of transparency used in an organizational context where the concept is understood as making documents available or being accountable. Here, transparency refers rather to a situation in which the function of framing as a tool in the pursuit of creating salience is understood by the actors participating in the debate. Actors that are not aware of the strategic framing used by others may not be able to take part in an equal manner in the debate, a factor which in turn reinforces the power relations between the actors. Moreover, transparency is enhanced by clarifying how framing and issue selection take place. As a consequence, the selective nature of debates is opened up to be evaluated and further investigated in the future.

Due to a lack of transparency in the interaction among actors, some actors may be able to steer the debate into a direction of their choosing by utilizing strategic framing. When the strategic side and nature of the debate is better understood, the process of making issue arena debates more transparent is furthered.

In this research a more profound understanding of choices in agenda setting and framing is created, which increases the transparency of the debate on human rights. This transparency is needed because actors should be aware of the strategic choices made in the debate, given that they influence the final decisions on human rights.

The qualitative multidisciplinary model developed starts from the notion that actors and issues intertwine in issue arenas, as do the networks the actors form. Castells (2009: 19) said that “a network is a set of interconnected nodes”. Actors form networks, can be part of many different networks and may participate in various issue arenas. Competition and cooperation are basic functions of networks (Castells, 2000). Debate and decision making are not a closed action by one actor. Actors move between different issue arenas. To simplify the situation, issues move through three stages in issue arenas, as pictured in Figure 1.

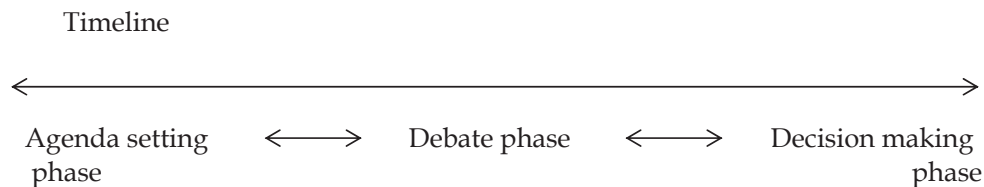


FIGURE 1 Stages of issue debate

Yet, the reality of issue arena debates is more complex than shown in Figure 1. Issues are debated on multiple issue arenas. Decisions are made on various arenas, domestically and internationally. Not just one actor participates.

Taking a look at the first stage of the complex issue arena debate, the agenda setting phase, issue salience is aimed at. Actors react to other actors, turning the process as well as the subsequent debate into a game situation of a selective nature. When operating in issue arenas, actors react to the framing and other communicative actions of other actors. Therefore, in the interaction - e.g. negotiation of meaning - collaboration, competition and disregarding may occur. Additionally, different actors can put different causal relations forward that explain what led to the issue and contributes to the continuation of the problem. Various actors can make use of different cause and effect narratives that may concern causes and effects relating to societal problems. Vilka (2007) for instance notes that causal relations in research refer to discovering cause-and-effect relations in the data, as are discussed in greater depth in Section 2.5.1. Causal chains shape the understanding of events, and a causal chain can be emphasized when framing the issue.

Actors who participate in the debate, or want to become part of the debate and subsequent decision making, cannot focus on all the issues they would prefer to prioritize. Due to the selective realities of actors’ ability to focus on issues and the limited carrying capacities of issue arenas, issues undergo a process of

selection. Some issues are ranked more important, more salient, than others in agenda setting. In this way agenda setting is a zero-sum game: when at a certain time one issue is pushed forward in the debate as salient by using a particular frame, other frames or issues are not then gaining attention. The zero-sum feature is a reality in that particular moment in that particular issue arena. At another moment the situation can be different, however. Thus, issue arena debate is in reality dynamic and complex. In human rights debate various actors have selective interest and they frame issues differently. Therefore there may be various understandings of issues that are discussed, numerous frames involved and the actors who debate can change quickly in unpredictable ways as part of the dynamic complexity of issue arenas, that can truthfully be described as ever-changing.

All the actors may have various viewpoints and understandings of causal relations on issues that they regard as most salient. Issues must be constructed as salient in order to attract attention from other actors and, consequently, to be debated. Some authors (Downs, 1972; Henry and Gordon, 2001: 157/175) have argued that the attention for an issue is not static over time. Issues appear and disappear in debate. Framing can be used in the process of creating issue salience. This calls for a strategic view on framing and how it is used to construct issue salience.

In addition, having multiple actors involved in the debate raises questions: who sets the agenda, whose frame is seen as dominant in the debate, and which actors are welcomed? In multi-actor debate, power and gaining or maintaining a gatekeeping position is important. In the debate, particular actors function as gatekeepers. Gatekeepers can be identified by having a core position in the central hub of the network and a possibility to influence what issues are debated, via what frames, and which actors are seen as legitimate and credible, as is discussed in detail in Section 2.3.2. With some actors as central powerful gatekeepers and others in a less-central role, different positions of power exist in the network, influencing the course of the debate and its outcomes.

Power relations and the strategies used to obtain and maintain them are subject to change. Actors can attempt to change power relations by using strategic communication, with framing as an essential aspect of it. The processes of the debate and consequent decision making are issue and actor specific. The fact that issues may be discussed in different issue arenas by perhaps a different group of actors adds to the dynamics of power relations and gatekeeper roles. An actor who is a gatekeeper in one network and dominates one particular issue arena may in another issue arena be one of the less powerful, referred in this study as less central. Moreover, whoever has a central position may change when the debate moves on to another issue arena. Having a better position, credibility and legitimacy helps being able to set the agenda in the issue arena. Therefore, actors try to improve or secure their position to gain issue salience and consequently achieve their goals. This is also a reality in the debate on human rights. In the next Section 1.2 a preview to the human rights debate is given.

1.2 Human rights debate

Human rights constitute an area of social issues that relate to multiple actors and viewpoints. Human rights may be regarded as absolute. Yet there are many cases where a common understanding on who in a specific context or place has human rights is lacking. Human rights and the debate about them have developed throughout history. However, because of the selective reality of the debate, human rights issues and even horrendous violations need to be regarded as salient in order to gain sufficient attention to facilitate decision making and consequently problem solving, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In addition, human rights issues, similarly to other issues, do not exist alone. Issues are always connected to other issues and causal relations are found between events and actors. Issues form clusters, and sometimes the complexity of issue clusters is not understood, nor the causal relations that explain the occurring events. Multiple frames and issues may be suggested in the debate, but only a few can be relevant at one and the same time. Some years ago Winter and Eyal (1981: 381) argued that social issues can only remain relevant during four to six weeks. Some authors explain that issues become topical in a cycle. The issue attention cycle described by Downs (1972: 39-41) comprises five evolutionary stages, starting with the pre-problem stage, moving through the euphoric stage, the realization of costs stage, the decline stage and on to finally the post-stage, where those issues are replaced by new ones. Additionally, actors such as organizations can create salience for issues (Crabbe and Vibbert (1985: 13).

Hilgartner and Bosk (1988: 55) criticized Downs' model, stating that issues exist in relation to other issues, and they said that it did not take into account competing issues as it ought to have done, since issues, as well as frames, compete with each other for the attention of decision makers and citizens. Additionally, Hilgartner and Bosk (1988: 70) say that "each arena has a carrying capacity that limits the number of social problems it can entertain during a given period", which means that only a limited number of issues can be discussed at any one time. The critique is valid, given the dynamic nature of discussions in issue arenas. Nisbet and Hoge (2006) report that they indeed found competition between issues, as well as evidence of the limited carrying capacities of arenas.

In any case, the debate on human rights issues and subsequent decision making such as law and policy formation is a long process. Communication is a precondition for decision making and improvement of the human rights situation. Actors participating or wishing to participate in the debate have to communicate their point-of-view. Pettigrew (1973: 233) states that "demands have to be communicated". Consequently, Lasswell (1948) and Pettigrew (1973: 233) point out two central aspects in studying the flow of demands in networks that researchers should focus on:

- who communicates with whom, about what, and when
- the determinants of these relationships.

This research focuses primarily on the first part: the whys and hows, from a constructionist perspective. This research does not focus on how particular human rights issues are being debated or how certain decisions are being made, but it formulates a theoretical multidisciplinary framework and illustrates how framing is used as a strategic tool for creating salience in an issue in the human rights debate. The debate prior to the policy and law formation is as important as the endgame.

As Pettigrew (1972: 187) mentions, "every organization has a system of communication" which is used to formulate and implement organizational goals, stay connected with the environment, co-ordinate the various activities, and importantly: "communication systems are also the carriers of power". Communication and information are connected to power, and power relations are ever present in issue arenas and in the debate over human rights. Communication, and the use of strategies such as framing, are essential in the study of power relations and decision making concerning human rights.

Human rights are connected to values and sense-making. What actors regard as salient is often based on values and beliefs. Consequently they can perceive the same issue in different ways and highlight different aspects of it when expressing their views. Social issues often relate to broader problems for various actors with different interests, such as product safety and the environment (Carroll, 1979: 501), to take but one as an example. Botan and Taylor (2004: 655) make the clarification that an issue exists when action takes place based on the public's shared interpretations of events and/or actions in their environment. An issue may be relevant, but its legitimacy will depend on the interest and actions of the actors in the issue arena. Shared understanding may not always be found, however, as actors may not agree on what issues should be debated as human rights issues and in what context. This creates possibilities for the most powerful actors, the gatekeepers, to dominate the debate over human rights.

Power does not need to be seen in a negative light. In human rights debate, power-play is not an irrelevant factor (Bob, 2009; Carpenter 2011). Often gatekeepers or specific leaders are needed in the debate and in social movements (Nepstad and Bob, 2006). Also, there may be cases where human rights and the aim to find solutions to violations are subordinate to power relations. Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) claim that for some actors the main goal for formulating social issues is not to define issues or solutions, or be "activists", but, "for some, social problems are just another day at the office" (1988: 63).

However, even the most noble and ethical actors must have power in order to be able to influence the debate and decision making. Indeed, actors need power to advocate solutions to violations or to highlight the salience of new human rights issues. In this research, power is viewed as a strategic means. The way to obtain and maintain power is not paved with only good intentions. Human rights issues may not always be regarded as important in the debate, or their solution as feasible. Moreover, though human rights generally are deemed important, there may be multiple views presented in the debate on a particular human rights issue. Because of the limited carrying capacities of issue arenas

and actors, not all issues can be discussed simultaneously. Issue arena debates and decision making can be initiated as a co-operative action in which two or more actors participate. This may not always be the case, however.

Debates are complex, since actors may not always share information, position, resources or even agree on issues or frames. Pettigrew (1972; 1973: 232) discussed information as a resource of power. Thus, the question arises: can gatekeepers control the debate? This question is essential, given that when certain chosen issues are debated using certain frames, it influences the subsequent decision making, because alternative viewpoints and cause-and-effect realities may be missing from the debate. As a result the policies and laws made may be one-sided and insufficient to target the root causes of serious human rights violations.

Human rights are international political issues. They are debated in national and international issue arenas. It is vital to study the topic from a multidisciplinary basis. Human rights should not be studied exclusively from the perspective of political science or law. By taking the interaction in issue arenas into account, a more profound understanding of the construction of issue salience, and framing as a part of power relations, can be gained. Understanding of the human rights debate from a wider perspective can benefit the transparency of the debate.

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis is built on a combination of four empirical studies - see Table 1. The studies investigate different aspects of the topic. The first study clarifies the concept of agenda setting in the human rights field. It draws on classical and modern agenda setting theory and connects this to online communication of human rights NGOs. The second study investigates the framing of social issues. A typology of issue framing is developed based on Hallahan's (1999) seven types of framing. The third study scrutinizes power relations among human rights NGOs, based on an analysis of an online campaign by a relatively unknown NGO and the reactions it provoked. The fourth study focuses on human trafficking and the interrelatedness of the issues linked to this topic and the framing of context in human rights debate.

TABLE 1 Brief overview of the four studies

<i>Study I. Agenda setting</i>	<i>Study II. Framing of social issues</i>
<i>Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks</i>	<i>Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues</i>

The thesis is structured as follows. After introducing the aim of the thesis and clarifying the research topic, the theoretical framework is presented. In this chapter, Chapter 2, the different theories that provide insights on the topic are discussed, and connections as well as relevance to one another are shown and discussed in detail. This is followed by Chapter 3 which further introduces the research approach and the four empirical studies mentioned in Table 1. The research approach with its research questions and methods is explained, and the chosen methods are justified per study. This section is followed by Chapter 4, where findings of the studies are discussed. In Chapter 5 the results of the study are discussed. The thesis ends with conclusions in Chapter 6, where also the multidisciplinary theoretical model is presented, and lastly the research ethics, societal contribution of the study, and its limitations, are discussed.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This PhD thesis is based on literature from various disciplines, and in particular from the fields of communication and of political sciences, along with specialised human rights literature. In the first paragraph the conceptual framework is presented. Different theoretical approaches are discussed that clarify aspects of the debate in multi-actor issue arenas, after which the main insights related to multi-actor debate of social issues gained from the theories are combined to offer an integral view as a base for a better understanding of the debate on human rights. Human rights are discussed by NGOs and traditional political actors, and they aim to influence social and political debate as well as the subsequent decision making. In this process framing is used and power positions formed inside the networks. Next the conceptual framework is presented.

2.1 Conceptual framework and overview of theoretical approaches

The conceptual framework is shown in Table 2. It begins from human rights, as they are the centre of this research. NGOs are central actors in human rights debate and work, next to traditional political actors such governments and multinational organizations such as European Parliament and United Nations. Martens (2002: 282) define NGOs as “formal (professionalized) independent societal organizations whose primary aim is to promote common goals at the national or the international level.” All actors strive to set the agendas for the debate, and in this process framing is used to construct issue salience by emphasizing certain aspects or objects of issues and/or actors.

TABLE 2 Conceptual framework

Human rights	Human rights are regarded as universal but are often debated and adopted as policies and norms in a selective manner by actors
NGOs and political actors	Non-governmental organizations are central organized groups and organizations in human rights debate and work. NGOs and various international multistate actors can be considered as political actors, since they aim to influence political debate and the decision making processes
Agenda setting and agendas	Previously regarded as traditionally the media's influence on public debate and opinion. Nowadays it includes also other actors, such as NGOs and groups from civil society and their respective ability to influence the debate. Agendas are lists of issues ranked according to their importance
Issues and issue arenas	Issues are topics that are or are not discussed by two or more actors in issue arenas, in platforms that are real or virtual
Issue salience	Issue importance - issues are regarded more or less important by actors
Framing and framing strategies	Framing is used to construct salience for objects of issues and for issues and actors. Framing means strategically emphasizing some matters above others, for example, to put an event or an actor in a certain light
Networks and multi-actor debate	Actors form networks that are not static. Actors can belong to various networks and be engaged in debates where multiple actors discuss issues
Communicative power	Actors can have power also as communicators which involves a clever usage of various communication channels and means as well as framing strategies
Gatekeepers	Gatekeepers are powerful actors inside networks; they have a central power-position and often better resources such as bigger and better educated staff, financial

	resources, access and the possibility to generate information
Interaction in issue arenas	Gatekeepers and less central actors interact in issue arenas, where they may or may not form strategic alliances, engage in negotiations and problem solving or pursue other goals

In order to make the most favourable issues the most salient ones, framing is used as a strategic means. Illustrating how strategic framing is used as a tool in creating salience, in this process issues and frames may be selected to further a certain goal, an endgame, which also calls for power as a characteristic of the actor.

Strategic framing choices alone can illustrate a function of power in the debate over human rights. In particular, central actors, gatekeepers, form the central hub. They have the ability to control the debate, by deciding which issues are debated and which are not, and with what frames, and to even influence which actors can participate in the debate as legitimate and credible actors. The gatekeeper and less central relationships influence the multi-actor debate because the gatekeepers are able to control the debate and keep issues that less-central actors may view as salient out of the debate. As a consequence many issues may intentionally be kept out of the debate by gatekeepers' activities which further illustrates the function of gatekeepers' use of power to dominate the debate.

Various theoretical approaches in the literature contribute to the multidisciplinary frame. Key authors in the thesis are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Theoretical approaches

Theories	Key sources
Human rights	The UN, Muchlinski (2001), Howard-Hassmann (2005), Dahre (2010), Leppänen (2011)
Non-governmental NGOs	Keck and Sikkink (1998), Martens (2002), Dutta-Bergman (2005), Murdie (2009)
Networks	Lewin (1947), Castells (2000; 2009), Hudson (2001), Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery (2009)
Gatekeepers	Lewin (1947), Pettigrew (1973; 1972), Bob (2009; 2005), Carpenter (2011; 2007)
Agenda setting	Cohen (1963), McCombs and Shaw (1972), Zhu (1992), (Sheafer, 2007), Uscinski (2009), Carpenter (2011)
Framing	Entman (1993), Benford and Snow (2000), Brewer and Gross (2005), Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), Weaver (2007), Meriläinen and Vos (2013; 2014)
Power	Dahl (1957), Bachrach and Baratz (1962), Lukes (1973), Barzilai-Nahon (2008)

The different theoretical approaches are explained further in the next chapters.

2.2 Human rights

Human rights are seen as universal and fundamental. They are investigated from various perspectives, especially law and political sciences. Human rights also have a moral and philosophical dimension. Shestack (1998: 202) mentions that “human rights are a set of moral principles and their justification lies in the province of moral philosophy.” However, human rights are not neutral. They do have a value base, as will be discussed later.

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, OHCHR, (UN, 2014). There can be various arguments made as to where human rights stem from and what are the roots of human rights. Muchlinski, for example (2001: 33), men-

tions that the doctrine of modern human rights stemmed from the right to own property, while others refer to the United Nations and its Declarations and to political systems, along with the cultures and corporations that influence human rights norms (Reisman, 1990; Cassel, 1995; Leane, 2011; Minkler and Sweeney, 2011).

Various human rights violations occur all around the world, despite numerous declarations of human rights and international treaties. Though not legally binding, the first key declaration to address human rights directly was The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations, which was adopted on 10 December 1948, just two years after the Second World War. According to the UN, the Declaration, with its basis in international law, states that no matter what colour, gender, national or ethnic origin, language, nationality, place of residence, religion or any other status, the declaration "represents the universal recognition that basic rights and fundamental freedoms are inherent to all human beings, inalienable and equally applicable to everyone, and that every one of us is born free and equal in dignity and rights" (UN, 2014).

The problem with the declaration, however, is that though it laid the groundwork for various human rights declarations and international law treaties to come, the UDHR does not define precisely what human rights are (McDowell, Libal and Brown, 2012: 2). There are various other declarations and documents that were drafted in later decades and which define various rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Many of these rights are interconnected.

"There are several core concepts underlying the fabric of human rights. Human rights are first and foremost inalienable. They are also indivisible and interdependent" (McDowell et al. 2012: 4).

However, throughout history, and in recent years, it has become an evident fact that the doctrine of human rights and the debate about them are selective. Dahre (2010: 641) argues that there is no such thing as universal human rights. From the beginning human rights were granted to selected people, mostly men, leaving out various groups, such as indigenous people, slaves, and women and children (Muchlinski, 2001: 33). Leppänen (2011: 93) states that at least in theory human rights belong to all. Yet in her study she found out that in reality not all people are equal and that some have different sets of rights depending on national legislations and norms.

Despite the fact that the Declaration of Human rights and various other treaties have been signed by most countries in the world, and in many cases human rights are regarded as universal and unquestionable, human rights violations occur everywhere. One reason is that human rights have strong political and value dimensions. These dimensions affect the debate over human rights and subsequent decision making. Human rights are seen as being salient selectively, and sometimes only lip services is given them by decision makers. The human rights debate can also be influenced by power relations between actors

so that human rights issues themselves may be left as only secondary issues whilst power-positions are being battled out in issue arenas.

Multiple actors from various cultural backgrounds and value-sets participate in the human rights debate and the subsequent formulation of new laws and policies. Thus the dynamics of the debate are complex. Therefore, first the nature of the diverse multi-actor debate is discussed here, followed by an outlook over the political dimension of human rights.

2.2.1 Culture and values in multi-actor human rights debate

Several actors participate in the debate on human rights and the formulation of human rights policies. This creates a basic question: if and when multiple actors from various cultural backgrounds with their own aims, understandings of causal relations and endgame scenarios, participate in this process, can there be a common understanding of issues and their salience?

No debate, including human rights, is static. In reality the international human rights framework is developing continuously and new rights are introduced regularly, although inconsistencies between national and international laws and policies are usually corrected at a slow pace (Gruskin and Ferguson, 2009: 116). The definitions of rights and to whom they are applied are subject to change, and human rights speech may be paying only lip service, as mentioned by The European Parliament (Meriläinen and Vos, in-review). Given that there are various understandings and types of framing in regard to human rights, these aspects should be understood in order to further understand why and how the debate takes place regarding a specific issue. The various perspectives present at the debate influence the debate itself and the subsequent decision making.

Culture and values influence the debate on human rights to a large extent, impacting the way arguments are framed in the debate. Owing to their different sets of cultural beliefs, values and experiences, people have different understandings of what human rights are (Okin, 1998), and they affect the debate. Marsh and Payne argue that “the norms that are being spread might be incongruent with different cultures” and that “some cultures might not be prepared for the adoption of the complete human rights agenda” (2007: 684). Additionally, the authors argue that prior to accepting the human rights norms they have to be rooted in the culture, and that proviso makes room for different understandings of what constitute human rights.

“Despite what the government does, the society itself might not be prepared to accept such legal norms, and governmental authorities will not be able to support or sustain them. It is not enough to enact a law or treaty promoting Western religious freedoms and hope that a non-Western nation’s culture will simply catch up” (Marsh and Payne, 2007: 684-5).

The culture and the environment where one belongs affect one’s understanding of human rights issues. Issues that have long been regarded as part of the cul-

ture in time can become debated as human rights issues, from rights to violations and even genocide (Schott, 2011). What is seen as a right and what as violation are connected to the cultural environment, so are highly sensitive culturally and actors representing various sides from should be heard when addressing these issues, for example when debating female genital mutilation (Shweder, 2000). In this connection, Maedl (2011) argues that the victim's perspective should be included in the debate on human rights, and that it often may in fact be missing.

Values are present in the debate, given that there is little possibility to debate over human rights in an objective manner. Busby (2007) states that to persuade policy gatekeepers to become involved advocacy frames should include values that have wide societal appeal and personal relevance. However, if certain values are not shared the strategic emphasis (i.e. frames) should concentrate on alternative aspects, with the original unshared values carefully embedded in the discussion (Epprecht, 2012: 243). Actors may intentionally discredit human rights frames by opposing them with security or fear frames, in which case the human rights actors must reframe the myths of fear and anxiety in terms of fact and truth (Cook, 2010: 160). Additionally, bandwagon framing - where multiple frames are combined, could be used (Nicholson and Chong, 2011: 121). This can lead to the issue gaining new salience in the debate among previously uninterested audiences, especially when connected to values. This may mean combining environmental protection frames with human rights frames as suggested by Nicholson and Chong (2011).

The understanding that culture is part of debate on human rights is important because if cultural sensitivity is missing it can lead to a lack of consensus about whose rights should be protected (Miller, 2013). Dahre (2010: 649) argues that human rights are used to justify particular cultural, moral and political views internationally, which can be said to be a form of cultural imperialism. In a similar manner, Pogge (2005) argues that the West benefits from the rules set by themselves, while at the same time looking the other way when human rights violations occur.

2.2.2 Human rights, political dimension and NGOs

Bob (2002: 230) mentions that human rights "are not politically or morally neutral". They are political instruments and, consequently, the discourse of human rights is connected to influence, force and political power (Dahre, 2010: 646). Besides being political by nature, and thus calling for both social and political solutions, human rights do not appear and disappear by themselves.

Political dimension of human rights

Related to human rights language and decision making, Ibhawoh (2011: 80) states that "the language of human rights has become a principal means of legitimizing political and social agendas". Ibhawoh (2011: 104) also mentions that

“the legitimizing language of human rights has been used to pursue goals that have more to do with the international politics of power and resistance, as well as the interest of ruling”. Human rights can indeed be used as a tool in the debate to achieve an alternative endgame, different from the aim of a better human rights situation. Hafner-Burton, Tsutsui and Meyer (2008: 135-36) argue that repressive states, especially those with greater autonomy, may ratify human rights treaties because no sanctions will be implemented, and ratification legitimizes their policies at low cost while violations continue as normal. Additionally, there has also been a debate on what political system supports and guarantees the human rights. Authors such as Davenport (1999: 96/108) and Langlois (2003) argue that without democracy human rights are not rights at all:

“Democracy should remain on the agenda of human rights proponents the world over, because without it human rights cease to be rights, they become attractive but ultimately optional norms or standards” (Langlois, 2003: 1019).

Similarly, Howard-Hassmann (2005: 1) discussed the connection between capitalism and democracy to human rights: “Capitalism is a necessary, though hardly sufficient condition for democracy: democracy is the best political system to protect human rights”. Howard-Hassmann also argues for globalization being a potential and powerful tool in the promotion of human rights globally, yet noting that the final outcome of the process is still unknown (2005: 40), whereas Klein (2000) criticizes globalization for not bringing human rights to locals in less-developed countries. Elsewhere, Moravcsik claims that human rights and treaties are adopted by governments if this produces favourable outcomes to the state:

“in sum, governments promote [human rights] norms abroad because they are consistent with universal ideals to which they adhere; governments accept them at home because they are convinced doing so is ‘appropriate’ ” (2000: 224).

Additionally, governments can draw up treaties and agree to human rights norms, but if citizens do not accept them as legitimate, support to sustain them does not exist (Marsh and Payne, 2007: 687), as already discussed in the previous section relating to human rights and values. Thus, both value and social-political support are necessary to legitimize human rights, and framing can be used in the process of creating salience in human rights issues.

Human rights and NGOs

Human rights debate draws together multiple actors. As Beyrer (2001: 548) mentions, human rights issues, such as human trafficking, need political attention and resolution by combined efforts from NGOs and various international multistate actors. Although treaties and policies are finalized by traditional political actors in national or international parliaments and institutions, such as the Finnish Eduskunta, the European Parliament and the UN, many actors are

involved in shaping them through the public debate or the politicians and their advisors prior to the final decision making.

This study uses NGOs as an example of actors in the human rights debate. NGOs have become political powers that set the agenda and that frame and promote various power strategies (Steinberg, 2011: 24). NGOs operate next to more traditional political actors, such as members of parliaments and intergovernmental bodies. Despite differences, there are similarities between NGOs and traditional political actors.

NGOs, including human rights organizations, have been involved in international law and norm formulation, and in its implementation, and act in a similar way to political parties (for e.g. Abebe, 2011). Clarke (1998: 37) says that "NGOs have become important political actors in the developing world", and have significant influence on human rights and environmental protection issues (Clarke, 1998: 43). Murdie (2009: 440) found that human rights NGOs do indeed have political impact and can have a moderate impact on human rights performance. NGOs have evolved from activist groups to legitimate political actors, and according to Martens (2002) Amnesty International (Amnesty), for example, has changed its role from agenda setter to advisor and formulator to the UN. Joachim (2003: 268) in turn states that "NGOs engage in strategic framing processes to set the agenda in three stages: the definition of problems, the development of solutions or policies, and politicization".

Various human rights NGOs have different roles. Some human rights NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch (HWR) focus mainly on norm development and on expert advocacy work aimed at decision makers, whereas Amnesty is involved on the grassroots level (Meriläinen and Vos, 2011: 306). NGOs also empower the public to participate, because they may be seen as easier to be approached compared to traditional political parties. NGOs may be seen as being the voice of the people. It is the public that can create change processes (Goss, 2001), and therefore NGOs encourage public participation at the grassroots level, including the public in their operations, for example by writing letters, framing petitions, and organizing demonstrations and user boycotts (Scholte, 1999: 5), in order to gain grassroots support for the more polished politicized agendas. Grassroot support creates legitimacy and credibility for NGOs as a countervailing power to decision makers. This role of NGOs as a countervailing power is created by mobilizing public support and bringing sensitive issues to public and political notice. Simmons (1998: 87) even argues that NGOs often make the impossible possible by doing what governments cannot or will not do.

Although NGOs may be needed to bring up sensitive issues such as human rights violations, this thesis does not portray NGOs as do-gooders, but aims to clarify the strategic side of the human rights debate using human rights NGOs as an example of actors in the debate. It therefore scrutinizes if and how these actors make strategic choices concerning agenda setting and framing of human rights issues.

According to Dutta-Bergman (2005: 284), human rights NGOs are neither neutral nor apolitical. They influence political debate and decision making and

market their products, i.e. campaigns and ideologies (Blood, 2004: 128), to distinguish themselves from other NGOs, their competitors. There are signs that this competition has weakened the support for and effectiveness of many NGOs (Ohanyan, 2009: 479). Additionally, human rights NGOs are likely to advocate the issues the western audiences are interested in (Litvin, 2003). Along the same lines, Rodio and Schmitz (2010) studied the evolution of human rights NGOs, and found that they have to make difficult choices with limited resources. They argue that:

“Human rights NGOs are not necessarily significant (or ‘good’) players in global politics because they publish reports and know how to use the international media. Rather, they are significant players because we can trace their impact in modified foreign policies or changed behaviour of governments and other collective actors” (2010: 457).

For actors operating in networks with the aim to better a human rights situation, there is always a counter-movement of actors trying to prevent the change process (Bob, 2012). As Bob (2012: 198) states regarding policy making or unmaking “open-minded interchange might be preferable but this is unrealistic”.

Additionally, multiple NGOs may not share the same goals or values and the distribution of resources and political responsibilities may be uneven (Jordan and Tuijl, 2000). Similarly, Harrison (2007) says that consensus may not always exist between NGO partners in the network and thus concludes “not only that different partners can have different conceptions of partnership but also that each partner may operate with different conceptions of partnership at different times or in different contexts” (2007: 397).

Murdie and Bhasin (2011: 169/179/185) found that human rights NGOs are also motivated by material goals, have intended and unintended effects on violent and nonviolent protests, and that their international campaigns may not generate grassroots actions amongst locals. Steinberg (2011: 44) adds that NGOs often suffer from democracy deficit, poor accountability, and lack of transparency, yet still are powerful political actors on the international stage. But although they may also suffer from elitism and bureaucracy, NGOs are influential actors on the international stage (Hoffman, 2004: 128), with a legitimate will to protect human rights and solve violations.

Even the biggest NGOs with the largest staff and donations cannot focus on all issues. Earlier Donnelly (1982: 315) stated that there are different views on human rights and that while debating which view is correct the practice of monitoring human rights may be weakened. NGOs are hesitant to promote new human rights issues that are not valued in the international issue arenas (Smith, Pagnucco and Lopez, 1998), as is also addressed by Carpenter (2007; 2011) and Bob (2009). Networks exist in human rights debate. Next, the concept of networks in relation to human rights debate is discussed.

2.3 Network theory

Human rights issues are debated by multiple actors in issue arenas. These actors form networks. Networks and actors intertwine. Actors can belong to various networks and have discussions in various issue arenas. Networks are fluid and never static. Different actors have different amounts of power, so some function as central gatekeepers while others are less central actors in the networks. Network theory is used to explain the relations between actors in this research and how power works as a means to strategically construct salience for some issues, whilst de-constructing it for other issues.

2.3.1 Networks

Network theory has been used in various disciplines. Castells (2009: 19) defines networks as sets of interconnected nodes that may have varying relevances to the networks. Earlier, Lewin (1947) pointed out that channels, which are in this study referred to as networks, have no simple beginning and ending, but are circular in character; they intertwine and one channel can be part of another. In a human rights context Keck and Sikkink studied NGO advocacy networks and concluded that:

"Networks are forms of organization characterized by voluntary, shared, and horizontal patterns of communication exchange.... The network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas. We call them advocacy networks because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition" (1998: 8).

In a similar manner, Hudson (2001: 331) argues that relationships are the building-blocks of networks, and are balanced and prioritized on the basis of values, whereas Lin (1999: 31) says that individuals engage in interactions and networking in order to produce benefits. These benefits can be a better position in the network, the ability to set agendas, as well as increased credibility and legitimacy, which in turn impact the overall power position of actors. Along the same lines Yanacopulos (2005: 107) discusses NGO networks and coalitions, and their attempts to accomplish their goals, and concludes that resources, such as funding, legitimacy and information, all have an impact on the process. Thus, networks are unions of actors that have no definite shape or form, that are based on communication that may or may not flow freely between the actors, who aim to produce favourable outcomes.

Views on debated issues and frames may not always be shared and that can increase distrust between actors. When multiple actors participate in the debates, differences of points of view, values, beliefs, resources and sense-making can create blockages in both the flow of communication and relationships, moving the attention to power play and away from the human rights issues themselves. Guttenplan and Margaronis (2010) discuss distrust between

human rights actors. Trust is needed between actors who operate in the same issue arenas and who form networks. If there is no trust, then a consensus without any form of power-play is hard to find. As Pallas and Urpelainen (2013: 405) argue, "in the absence of consensus, power becomes a key issue". Power relations indicate hierarchies between gatekeepers and less central actors in the networks, which may be further strengthened by framing and selective issue agenda setting. The role of gatekeepers must be looked at in order to understand the network reality of issue arena debates.

2.3.2 Gatekeepers and less central actors

Gatekeepers have a central power position, often owing to their better resources such as bigger staff, more financial resources, better access and the possibility to produce information, as well as having a better educated staff. These powerful actors form the center of networks. The central hubs have the ability and means to create visibility for their chosen issues using agenda setting and vetting (Bob, 2009; Carpenter, 2011).

Early notions of gatekeeping can be drawn from the work of Lippmann (1921), when he postulated gatekeeping by arguing the power of media to influence opinions. Later on Cohen (1963: 13) famously said "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about", and that point later became known in theory as agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and framing.

In social sciences, Lewin (1947) first suggested the notion of gatekeeping when formulating the theory of channels. He argues that "coalition forces in and outside of the gate region decide who as a gatekeeper "is 'in power' for making decisions between 'in' and 'out'" (Lewin, 1947: 145). In a similar manner Easton (1965) and Pettigrew (1972: 190) mention that "gatekeepers, those who sit at the junction of a number of communication channels, are in a position to regulate the flow of demands and potentially control decisional outcomes." Information power and control is indeed a key aspect of any debate (Pettigrew, 1972; Barzilai-Nahon, 2008), an idea to which Bennett, Foot and Xenos (2011: 240) add with the observation that the distribution of power, position and resources permit some actors to become gatekeepers, and that they must be followed by those who are gated (less-central). Bob (2009) states that most gatekeepers, such as Amnesty, HRW, UNHCR and even human rights intellectuals are actors "with the largest budgets, best staffs, and greatest credibility in the rights movement" (2009: 6). Similarly, Barzilai-Nahon (2008) defines gatekeeping as a process of information control, which can include selection, addition, channeling, display withholding, shaping, manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard and even deletion: "the ability to produce information may produce power, but is not synonymous to power, and therefore a separation of these constructs (political power and information production) is important" (2008: 1500)".

Gatekeepers, who are leaders, may be needed to create strength and to compensate for the lack of other resources, while leadership in social movements is co-created with other actors, such as followers, opponents and third parties (Nepstad and Bob, 2006: 18). However, they often are selective in their agenda setting and framing (Bob, 2009; Carpenter 2010, 2011). The key task for the gatekeepers who form the central hubs is to remain precisely that: "central hubs wish to remain central hubs and prefer to be seen as leaders within a network rather than followers" (Carpenter, 2011: 98). Bob further claims that "when gatekeepers adopt the claim (an agenda) as a rights issue, the right becomes a recognizable issue on the international scene" (2009: 8). Along the same lines, Carpenter mentions that gatekeepers use agenda setting when "catapulting some new international issues to global prominence" (2011: 70), adding that "the refusal to legitimize a particular issue by adopting it on their organizational agenda results in the sidelining of some arguably important global social problems" (2011:70).

Even gatekeepers cannot make issues salient by magic. All actors use agenda setting and framing to construct issue salience. These concepts are introduced and discussed next.

2.4 Agenda setting

In the debate about human rights, actors need to maximize the visibility and salience of the issues they prioritize. Therefore messages must be constructed in a way to affect the sense-making of other actors. To understand *how* issue salience is created, the theory of agenda setting is vital. Lasswell states that "an act of communication can be analyzed in terms of "who/ says what/ in which channel/ to whom/ with what effect" (1948: 37). In the similar manner, Cox (1986: 207), relating to international relations theory, says that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose". In the debate actors form messages for some purpose, frame issues to increase salience and aim at setting them on the agenda in issue arenas.

2.4.1 Classical agenda setting

In previous decades the news media were seen as instigators of issue debates. The theory of agenda setting, which was proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), on the basis of earlier work by for example Lippmann (1922), postulates that a clear connection exists between news media coverage and public opinion, followed by various authors (see: McCombs and Reynolds, 2008; Larcinese, Puglisi and Snyder, Jr., 2011) that suggest a connection between news media coverage and public opinion. When reporting issues, the media add emphasis to some of these (Sheafer, 2007). Sheafer (2007: 21) noted media acting as gate-

keepers, the public acting as less central in agenda setting, as was earlier famously stated by Cohen (1963: 13) "The press [. . .] may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about." Indeed the basic assumption of the agenda-setting theory is that the news media in particular, more than the media in general, have an influence on public opinion (Sheafer and Weimann, 2005: 347), even in such issues as peace processes (Sheafer and Dvir-Gvirsman, 2010: 212).

Agenda-setting theory, therefore, explains how issues reported in the media can become important among the public. In other words: what the media report, people at large may see as more important than those issues not reported. The coverage of issues by the media has an effect, but the level of salience that an issue gains varies from one issue to another (See: Walgrave, Soroka, Nuytemans, 2008; Dunaway, Branton and Abrajano, 2010). There is a high level of correspondence between the amount of coverage given to issues and the level of importance assigned to these issues by people who have been exposed to media reports (Defleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989), illustrating the importance of values and sense-making in agenda setting. Classical agenda setting refers to the amount of attention a topic gains. Journalists make selective choices in emphasizing issues and the use of phrases and images (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley 1997: 576), which points to the selectiveness of journalist and editors. But in today's world, the media do not hold exclusive power in agenda setting.

2.4.2 Actor-driven agenda setting

Much of the early research on agenda setting focuses on the role of the news media, and although journalists create the agenda of the news media, the reality is more complex as many actors are involved in agenda setting, creating an author-driven framework. Journalists are approached by various sources attempting to get their issues on the media agenda (Moreno and Kioussis, 2009). In this line, Uscinski (2009: 797) argues that the classical agenda-setting theory leads to overestimation of the power of the media to influence public opinion. Uscinski (2009) proposes the concept of an audience-driven framework, where the public influences the media. In audience driven agenda setting, issues discussed by the public lead the media to adjust their agenda. Public debate, a public sphere notion has also been discussed by Habermas (1991, 2006). Additionally, actors such as organizations can act "as a catalyst for affirmative change" (Crabbe and Vibbert (1985: 13) meaning that they can influence decision makers to regard an issue as relevant and important for the organizations and, similarly, salient for the decision makers. Crabbe and Vibbert (1985: 13) further clarify by their catalytic model that "In essence, organizations wishing to catalyze policy processes begin to manage the 'creation' of an issue; they begin to help boost an issue through each status of its life cycle", which connects to the argument of social issues relevance put forward by Winter and Eyal (1981) and the issue attention cycle by Downs (1972), discussed in detail in Section 1.2.

The author-driven framework and the catalytic model are relevant in the NGO context as well, since media other than news media can create issue salience in issue arenas. Nowadays it is acknowledged that social media provide possibilities for various actors, such as human rights NGOs and individual people to spread their agendas, thus becoming agenda setters. The online interaction of actors can be seen as a co-creation and studied as a rhetorical arena in a multi-vocal approach (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010; Coombs and Holladay, 2014).

This research focuses on the notion that agenda setting is not controlled by the news media alone, but can also be a negotiation of meaning by various actors in issue arenas that can be online or offline (Vos et al. 2014). In this notion gatekeepers also exist. Gatekeepers can also be other actors than journalists. Networks of actors can participate in the formulation of agendas for the debate, as they can also partake in non-agenda setting, or keeping issues out of the agenda (Carpenter 2011: 70). The effectiveness of a refusal to address a certain issue is connected to an actor's power in relation to other actors (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2010), bringing in the concept of networks. Agenda setting is an important strategic tool for actors, especially for human rights NGOs that need to generate attention to human rights violations, and for which they can use framing. Investigating their agenda setting and framing strategies may bring a fresh perspective to the debate and on the transparency of human rights debate.

2.5 Framing

In Section 1.1, framing was conceptualized as a strategic tool to create salience for an issue. Following Vliegthart and van Zoonen (2011) along with Entman (1993) framing means emphasizing some matters above others, for example, to put an event in a certain light. This can be used to gain attention for an issue, in order to push an issue to the issue arena to be debated. During the debate framing can be used to create a context for the issue that is favourable for the actor.

Framing has also been called second-level agenda setting, thus making framing an extension of agenda setting together with priming. There are disagreements, however, in the scientific community about the issue and the relation of agenda setting and framing and priming as Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007), Weaver (2007) and Scheufele (2000) argue.

Framing can increase salience of one issue compared to other issues, as in agenda setting. In addition, framing can also makes some aspects of an issue more salient in the definition of situations, connecting it to other issues and suggesting causal relations, thus providing context. This affects the way in which an issue is seen. Entman argues that to frame means:

"to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation"(1993: 52).

Framing affects how the public views items (Brewer and Gross, 2005: 929) Mahon and Wartick (2003: 31) state that framing is a powerful tool, that is aimed at other actors and how they view issues or problems, or increasing the level of engagement of the larger public regarding the issue.

Framing, like agenda setting, is not done only by journalists, but can be seen as a process involving various actors, and so is connected to the social environment where it takes place.

"Production and reception [of frames] are not only affected by individual differences, but also by social and cultural contexts, structural divisions and power constellations. 'Frames' are part of a collective struggle over meaning that takes place through a multiplicity of media and interpersonal communication; draws from a range of resources, among which are news media and personal experience, and works out differently for particular individuals, groups and institutions" (Vliegenthart and van Zoonen, 2011: 112).

Benford (1997: 409) claims that framing research, especially in the perspective of social movements, has suffered from various shortcomings, including "neglect of systematic empirical studies, descriptive bias, static tendencies, reification, reductionism, elite bias, and monolithic tendencies", especially by reducing the focus to chosen issues and actors.

Values and causal relations are important aspects of framing, especially framing in the human rights debate. They are discussed next.

2.5.1 Values and causal relations in framing

Framing is always present in interaction by actors and is connected to actors' values and sense-making. Human rights are connected to values, as discussed in earlier Section 2.2. , and these can be addressed in framing. Values are essential motivational beliefs about outcomes or favourable modes of individual behaviour (Kilburn, 2009: 871) and they are key aspects of agenda setting and framing (Meriläinen and Vos, 2013: 121-22). Adding values to frames can be used in strategic purposes to attract a wider appeal for an issue. If the chosen frames do not resonate with pre-existing values, then an issue may be disregarded (Meriläinen and Vos, 2013: 121). Additionally, cultural cues can provide credibility (Dimitrova and Lee, 2009: 548), thereby showing how important it is to acknowledge the connection with the social environment. Indeed, framing is an ongoing process and it is influenced by the surrounding environment and the publics involved (Benford and Snow, 2000). A value frame connects issues and values that present one aspect of an issue as right, which may turn an issue into a salient and legitimate one in the actor's evaluation of various sets of issues. An example of using a value frame is to attach an emotional narrative to a human rights issue such as child abuse, or to a detailed exploitation description

concerning the issue of human trafficking. According to Brewer, a value-frame is:

“An association between a value and an issue that carries an evaluative implication: It presents one position on an issue as being right (and others as wrong) by linking that position to a specific core value” (2001: 46)

Along these lines, Shen and Edwards (2005: 804) argue that people bring their own mental frames and existing values, into the coding process, adding to the dynamic and selective process of framing. The selective nature of the framing process means that purposely and strategically a certain frame or narrative is selected that emphasises some matters above others to make issues, actors or events appear in a certain way, and possibly suggest a certain cause and effect scenario. The selective frame can be utilized simply to construct the chosen narratives to appear salient for other actors. For example, human trafficking can be selectively framed as a security issue or a gender issue with a chosen cause and effect scenario.

Also they argue:

“Consequently, values can have a powerful impact on how individuals think about issues, and individuals’ existing values can guide them in processing messages presented in news frames.” (Shen and Edwards, 2005: 804).

Schemer, Wirth and Matthes (2012: 345) state that value-framing is more effective when value-laden messages match the receivers’ own values. Similarly, in relation to political communication, Slothuus (2010: 172) found support for that political parties can successfully frame an issue, if it resonates with the existing beliefs of supporters, thus receivers.

While framing focuses on how different meanings compete for support in issue arena, sense-making stresses how the identification of patterns of meaning depends on salient cues from the environment (Weick 1999), meaning the acceptance of certain frames and their meaning on an actor level. Additionally Weick (1993: 635) explains that "the basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs."

Framing and especially value framing is not only used to create meaning and context, but also to create causal relations. Causal relations create a context for issues, actors and events. The concept of causal relations is much used in medicine and environmental sciences. Causal relations in research refer to discovering cause-and-effect relations in the data (Vilka, 2007: 23). In environmental sciences, the concept of causal relations has been much debated and researched (See: Guzelian, Victoroff, Halmes, James and Guzelian, 2005; Meriläinen, 2007). Causality has also been discussed plenty in philosophy (See e.g. works of Hume and Kant) and later on discussed by Pettigrew (1972).

The notion of causal relations is highly relevant when researching issue arenas and creating understanding, ergo context, for human rights debate. In a debate on human rights, framing is used to construct causality between issues, events, and actors. A construction of causality that, for example, places blame on actions of certain actors, may lead to different ways being proposed to solve the issue. It is also effective in this process is to draw connections to values. If any actor is able to frame, or later on re-frame, an issue by using a value frame that connects a clearly understandable causal line of the event with certain actors, then that message is likely to have more effect. However the selective framing process (Lecheler and De Vreese, 2010), selective exposure (Mendelsohn, 1973; Hutchings, 2001) and various sense-making sets make framing specific to the actor, issue, place and time.

Additionally, framing is connected to actors' credibility and legitimacy, which in turn influence power relations in issue arenas. These aspects are discussed next.

2.5.2 Framing, credibility, legitimacy and power relations

Social and political debates and the act of framing are connected to credibility and legitimacy. Druckman (2001: 1050) emphasized perceived source credibility as a precondition to successful framing. Source credibility refers to credibility that the message sender has. Hallahan (2000: 470) states that the credibility of the message sender is one of the most important features that a communicator has: "Sources perceived as attractive, trustworthy, expert, dynamic, and powerful are more engaging and effective than those that do not feature these characteristics". In turn Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman (1981) mention that next to source credibility, high personal attitudes (see values) towards the issue may result in people processing the issue.

In the debate several actors can try to influence the opinions of other actors. Perceived credibility, legitimacy and power are needed to become a central player in the debate. In power relations credibility and legitimacy are connected to gatekeeper positions. Actors can use their source credibility to create issue credibility and legitimacy. Coombs (1992) emphasizes legitimacy in communication and suggests establishing as a first step issue legitimacy to attract the public to the issue, as a second step the organization's own legitimacy to get the audience to listen to their ideas, and as a third step policy proposal legitimacy to support the policy proposals in order to resolve issues.

Credibility, legitimacy and power influence not only framing, but how an actor can claim ownership for issues. Petrocik (1996: 826) noted this phenomenon in the context of political campaigns: "The theory of issue ownership finds a campaign effect when a candidate successfully frames the vote choice as a decision to be made in terms of problems facing the country that he is better able to "handle" than his opponent". In its core, by issue ownership some actors can frame themselves and their own causal interpretations of issues and events as better suited than those of other actors.

Walgrave and De Swert (2007:37) mention that issue ownership is connected to reputation, if actors are credible and reliable with some issues, they are, more than other actors, seen as able to deal with the problem at hand. The reputation of an actor influences whether they can claim ownership of an issue (Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) mention that the degree of ownership by a candidate may influence how issues are framed, connecting issue ownership and framing. Petrocik (1996: 847) observes, that to gain issue ownership, "issue handling competence is the key". As a consequence framing, values, and power relations are tied together with credibility, legitimacy and competence. To understand the concept of power in this human rights debate, the power itself has to be understood. This will be discussed next.

2.6 Power

Power can be regarded as a noun, adjective or a verb. Various disciplines can view power in different ways, for example, from a philosophical way to studying the usage of power from a military or financial perspective. Power can be lost, as well as obtained. This study views power as an attribute needed in getting attention for a topic and, on a different level, influencing how it is seen. Power is also connected to the position an actor has in the network. Those actors in a central position have more power in setting the agenda and choosing frames favourable for their goals. As a result, power is viewed as a strategic characteristic, a necessary attribute to have in order to formulate a successful strategy to make an impact in human rights issue arenas, and possibly consequently influence human rights decision making. Not all actors in issue arenas are equally able to define issues as the prominent ones, thereby demonstrating power in network relations.

Previously, Dahl famously said that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (1957: 80). However, the static notion of A's power over B is too limited for this study. Power is not a lasting or static characteristic. A may not always have power over B in every issue arena, and B may not always be aware of A's power. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) mention two kinds of power, noted often as the two faces of power, the decision making and non-decision making. In decision making, the first face of power, the actor participates in making other actors decide something, whereas non-decision making, the second face of power, refers to an actor's ability to keep issues intentionally out of the discussion (Anton, 2007: 25). In the first face of power, the power is visible to all parties who are subjected to it, in the second face the power may not be visible. In the second face of power, the gatekeeper is purposely trying to limit the openness of the debate by intentionally keeping certain issues out of the debate, meanwhile pushing favourable issues to the centre of the debate as salient ones.

“Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A” (Bachrach and Baratz (1962: 948).

In issue arenas these two faces of power are manifest in pushing some issues to greater prominence or using particular frames in the debate (decision making) while some issues are intentionally kept out (non-decision making). In terms of faces of power, framing is not just used to push or pull issues or frames out or in of the debate but also to influence values, e.g. by using value framing. This power refers to Lukes' (1974) third face of power, which refers to the ability to influence public values and points-of-view. Adding to the definition of power, Knoke (1993) refers to two dimensions of power: influence and domination. Influence happens when one actor produces information, a similar notion presented by Barzilai-Nahon, (2008) the information power, which is persuasive in its nature, with the intent of altering another's actions. This resonates with Lukes' (1974) third face of power. In turn, power domination happens when an actor controls other actors by offering or withholding benefits or harm, so it is an exchange of rewards of compliance, which coexists with the second-face of power by Bachrach and Baratz (1962). Information power was also much discussed in the work of Pettigrew (1972; 1978). Pettigrew (1972: 189) notes that power is not only a possession of power resources but also the control of them by the actor who possesses power and the skillful usage of power, as is evident in power relations.

2.6.1 Power relations

Given that there are various actors that participate in the debate and decision making with different interests and intentions, utilizing framing, a consensus may not always be found. This thesis argues that in the debate and decision making, framing can be used as a tool in creating issue and actor salience which contributes, in turn, to power. To illustrate the strategic function of framing in debates, the concept of power relations must be addressed. Not all actors are equally able to define issues as salient by demonstrating power by functioning as gatekeepers (Meriläinen and Vos, 2013), as discussed in previous chapters. Established gatekeepers can demonstrate power to less central actors by controlling the course of the debate, excluding certain frames and viewpoints, even alternative causal chains in human rights issues (Meriläinen and Vos, 2014). In this connection Knoke (1993: 24) argues that power relations are asymmetrical and allow some actors greater control over the behaviour of others, similarly to Pettigrew's statement on the subject (1972: 188; 1977:84):

"A power relation is a causal relation between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself. Power involves the ability of an actor to produce outcomes consonant with his perceived interests."

Power relations exist in the network and can be altered and influenced. Inside networks actors form power relations. In the networks power comes not only from the relative acquisition of important resources but also from an actor's relative position in the network due to enduring sets of ties to other actors (Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery, 2009). Next to an actor's position in relation to other actors, the resources at their disposal, such as information and control (Pettigrew, 1972; Barzilai-Nahon, 2008) also determine their power inside the network. Power should not thus be viewed by looking at how powerful one actor is alone but of the actor's position in the network, how the actor is positioned in relation to other actors and how resources such as information are used.

Relating to Section 2.3.2 on gatekeepers and less central actors, there are different kinds of positions that contribute to a gatekeeper's power in relation to other actors. Hafner-Burton and Montgomery (2010) present three network notions of power. First comes degree centrality, where an actor possesses a large number of strong ties, and close relationships to other actors in a network. Second is so-called betweenness centrality, where an actor links together other actors such as individuals, groups, or even entire networks of actors that have few other ties between them, facilitating the ability for actors to be brokers who otherwise lack connections. Third is closeness centrality, where an actor is near to another actor in the network, thus able to minimize the number of steps required to reach all other actors. Therefore, according to Hafner-Burton and Montgomery (2010), as a consequence that actor can potentially acquire and transfer resources more efficiently than other actors in the network, so is able to further legitimize its own power-position. As seen, various positions in the network can create favourable situations for actors in which to utilize their power. This applies to human rights networks as well, and will be discussed next.

2.6.2 Power relations in the human rights network

Network power relations affect human rights debate. Powerful actors as gatekeepers tend to control the debate about human rights, as explained in Section 2.3.2. Yet, power also comes from issue handling, information production and control as well as from cooperation and ties that actors have with other actors. Cooperation is important and some may argue that cooperation and information sharing are the keys to network relations. However, as discussed in earlier chapters, not all actors in the network have equal amounts of power, credibility and legitimacy, nor do they have equal positions and equal access to information and other resources for the debate. Therefore, some actors may not have as much say in the debate or be regarded as credible.

Davis and Murdie (2012: 23) found support for the argument that the human rights network "is comprised mainly of a few central players who are seen as prestigious within the network and others trying to link themselves to these players". Not all actors are welcomed into the network as equal partners, and,

for example, well-established actors such as key NGOs, often northern, are selective in choosing their southern partners (Pallas and Urpelainen, 2013). A Northern actor may co-operate with a newer actor who shares its own agenda, and can be persuaded to do so when this generates some kind of payoff, such as grassroots participation or successful campaign outcomes (Pallas and Urpelainen, 2013).

A selective reality is also found in how human rights NGOs choose the issues to address and prioritizing topics for campaigns, as discussed in Section 2.2.2. Pallas, Fletcher and Han (2012) state that if human rights NGOs and their actions were wholly based on morals and unselfishness, they would consistently go after the worst human rights offenders. Instead Pallas et al.'s note:

“The targets of NGO attacks are not necessarily the worst offenders, nor are those spared attacks the most virtuous. Rather, the institutions targeted by NGO advocacy are those most likely to capitulate in a way that is proportionate to the resources expended” (2012: 12).

Human rights agenda setting does not or cannot focus on all current issues due to limited carrying capacities (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988) and to constraints on power and resources. Powerful human rights NGOs determine which issues and frames to advocate by assessing multiple factors. They calculate the economic realities of organizational functions, such as size, position in the issue network, the amount of staff and financial resources. They anticipate possible benefits and feasibilities. NGOs estimate and select their possible targets of advocacy campaigns “on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis, in which NGOs weight the hoped-for level of change in the target’s behaviour against the resources necessary to undertake attacks on the target” (Pallas et al. 2012: 12).

However, neither actors' power nor who those who are central hubs in the network are stable entities. Power relations and the actors forming the central hubs can be affected by framing, which can change the discussion and, subsequent decision making. Moreover, fragmentation and tension can lead actors to form competing networks and alliances (Bennett, Foot and Xenos, 2011) with their own central hubs, which consequently can challenge the original central hub and the power relations in the human rights network and in the issue arenas. With clever use of agendas that have been made valid by framing, the gated may be able to break the existing power structure, bringing change to the power-relations in the issue arenas. Framing is a key aspect in this. Barzilai-Nahon (2008) argues that the less-central can have power in relation to the gatekeeper if they exhibit a combination of four attributes: 1) political power in relation to the gatekeeper, 2) the ability to produce information, 3) a relationship with the gatekeeper, 4) alternatives in relation to the gatekeeper. Thus, less-central control of agendas and frames via content production, relationship building and producing alternatives can change the course of the debate and influence power relations in the networks.

Now the theoretical frame is introduced. Next, the research approach will be clarified.

3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This PhD research takes a multidisciplinary approach to human rights debate in issue arenas. Multidisciplinary research is by nature a collective “teamwork” to explain a big research question or phenomenon, where the research questions are answered from multiple research fields and collected into a one research (Mikkeli and Pakkasvirta, 2007: 63-64). This approach is suitable for this research, given that it aims to explain the strategic scope of issue arena debates, focusing on the aspects of agenda setting and framing.

This PhD research is based on the theoretical framework described in detail in the previous chapters. The empirical studies each have their own research questions and specific research methods and their own focus while complementing each other. Next, an overview of the studies is presented.

3.1 Overview of studies

The PhD thesis combines four (4) empirical studies. Each study is conducted from a multidisciplinary approach and focuses on human rights debate in competitive issue arenas and power-relations in the debate. Together the studies provide ingredients for a model which adds to the understanding of the human rights debate. Table 4 provides an overview.

TABLE 4 Overview of Studies

<p>Study I. Agenda setting <i>Organizational communication, human rights and NGOs fields</i></p> <p>Human rights NGOs Online communication</p>	<p>Study II. Framing social issues <i>Organizational communication, human rights and NGOs fields</i></p> <p>Framing typology Salience</p>
<p>Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks <i>Organizational communication, human rights, NGOs, and political science fields</i></p> <p>Framing by NGOs Kony 2012 - campaign</p>	<p>Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues <i>Organizational communication, human rights, NGOs, and political science fields</i></p> <p>Framing context Human trafficking Integral approach</p>

The research scheme approaches the research topic of the human rights debate as a network-based selective phenomenon that involves interrelated networks of issues and of actors that increase issue salience and form causal relations by framing.

The choice of selecting a multidisciplinary approach has several key reasons. First, the human rights issues are discussed and studied as their own discipline, but also in various other fields. To restrict the analysis to a more customary legal point of view, for example, would reduce the distinctiveness of the approach and also therefore the added value of this thesis. Second, since human rights issues are debated and framed in issue arenas, communication theory has a key role in the theoretical framework. More specifically, human rights issues are discussed by multiple actors, such as NGOs, various groups/organizations and traditional decision makers, which also meant that organizational communication, would be integrated as another key part of the framework. Third, human rights issues are political issues debated and decided upon by political actors. Therefore political communication and political science formed a third key part of the framework.

The four studies are reported in peer-reviewed journals. The author of this doctoral thesis, Meriläinen, is the first author of all the articles included in this thesis. Professor Vos, is co-author of the articles. The responsibilities of each author were as follows.

- Article I: Meriläinen designed the study together with Professor Vos. She gathered the data, wrote the article, analysed the data, and compiled the figures with Vos, who was also in charge of the correspondence with the editor.
- Article II: Meriläinen designed the study together with Professor Vos. She gathered the data and analysed these. She wrote the article and compiled

the figures with the help of Vos. Meriläinen was in charge of the correspondence.

- Article III: Meriläinen designed the study. She gathered and analysed the data. She wrote the article and made the tables with the help of Vos. She was also in charge of the correspondence.
- Article IV: Meriläinen designed the study together with Professor Vos. She gathered the data and analysed these. She wrote the article with Vos. She was also in charge of the correspondence.

Next, an overview of the studies is presented, and it is discussed in more detail afterwards in the methods section.

3.1.1 Study I

The first study focuses on agenda setting and its usage by human rights NGOs in online environments. The purpose of the first study is first to create a better understanding of agenda setting concerning human rights, and to contribute to the theory, building on agenda setting framing. Second, audience-driven agenda setting and framing are discussed along with human rights and NGOs, thus creating transparency for the strategic side of the human rights debate to further develop the multidisciplinary connection between agenda setting and debate over human rights. Additionally, the first study clarifies the role of human rights NGOs as agenda setters in an online environment, to further increase the understanding of NGOs as strategic actors in the debate over human rights. The first study presents the connection between agenda setting and framing in NGOs' external communication in issue arenas, an issue which will be continued in Study II.

3.1.2 Study II

The second study focuses on framing in the public debate, using human rights literature as an example of the framing of social issues. The purpose is to better understand the usage of Hallahan's (1999) types of framing in the context of human rights, illustrating the possibility of using various framing methods to increase issue salience. Based on this, a typology of framing is developed for social issues. The study clarifies the types of framing used for human rights, consequently creating understanding of the strategic element of framing in the context of human rights and human rights issues, thereby adding transparency to the debate. The second Study firmly creates a connection between framing and how it is used to create salience for human rights issues and perspectives, an issue that is continued in Study III.

3.1.3 Study III

The third study focuses on gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks. The Kony 2012 campaign by Invisible Children and the response it generated in Amnesty and HRW over an 18 week period is study to illustrate the usage of framing and power relations in human rights networks. The purpose of the study is to better understand how three human rights actors: IC, Amnesty and HRW, frame issues in the debate, how two well-established human rights NGOs respond to framing done by a newcomer NGO, and how framing strategies contribute to power relations in a human rights network. Consequently the third study relates to creating transparency for the debate by showing how framing is used as a strategic means in network power relations. Moreover, the third study strengthens the concept of framing and the relations between central gatekeepers and less central actors. These aspects will be further discussed in Study IV.

3.1.4 Study IV

The fourth study focuses on the interrelatedness of issues in the debate over human trafficking. Study IV takes the example of the issue of human trafficking and how it is addressed by three actors, the European Parliament, Amnesty and HRW in two-year period. The study aims to discover in what context trafficking is discussed by the actors, what causal relations are found and used by actors and how actors frame human trafficking. Possible issue connections and causal reasoning create large networks of issues, events and actors that in turn affects the contexts where issues are discussed, consequently affecting the formation of new policies and laws in the EU. The fourth study clarifies the interrelatedness of issues in the debate over human trafficking, thus contributing to the understanding of how human rights issues are debated in issue arenas by multiple actors. The fourth study draws together all theories from previous three studies, arguing that the usage of framing strategies is central to the debate prior to the subsequent decision making, and thus shows how framing is used in the debate over human rights to create salience for issues and causal relations.

Next the research questions are presented for each individual study.

3.2 Research questions

This PhDs thesis combines four individual studies to create one larger study. The research questions are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5 Research questions

Studies	Research questions
I. Meriläinen and Vos. (2011) Human rights organizations and online agenda setting, <i>Corporate Communications: An International Journal</i> , Vol. 16 No 4, pp. 293 – 310	RQ1: What online communication activities are used by human rights organizations to initiate interaction on human rights issues? RQ2: How are the online communication activities of human rights organizations linked with organizational agenda-setting policies?
II. Meriläinen and Vos. (2013) Framing issues in the public debate: the case of human rights, <i>Corporate Communications: An International Journal</i> , Vol. 18 No 1, pp. 119 – 134	RQ1: Which types of framing are used in the debate on human rights issues? RQ2: How is framing used to increase the salience of human rights issues?
III. Meriläinen and Vos. (2014) Framing by actors in the human rights debate: the Kony 2012 campaign, <i>Nordic Journal of Human Rights</i> , Vol. 32 No 3, pp. 238 – 257	RQ1: How did the gatekeeper NGOs, Amnesty and HRW, react to the new actor, IC? RQ2: Did IC's Kony campaign affect the existing power relations in the NGO network?
IV. Meriläinen and Vos. (in review) Human trafficking and how it is discussed in international issue arenas	RQ1: In what context is human trafficking discussed by three actors? RQ2: How do these actors frame human trafficking?

Next the methodology is presented.

3.3 Methodology

The purpose of the research is to develop multidisciplinary theoretical understanding as well as to provide ingredients for a qualitative model of the process describing how salience in these issues is created by actors using framing in multi-actor issue arena debate. This PhD research combines traditional organizational communication and political science theories to human rights issues mainly in qualitative manner. For example organizational communication theories are applied to the NGO context and classical political science theories on power relations are in turn applied, in order to increase understanding of the relationships between actors in the human rights field during the debate and decision making processes. Additionally, traditional communication theory on framing can contribute to the understanding of power relations in debates and subsequent decision making processes, thereby creating a multidisciplinary approach to this research.

The aim of the research is two-fold:

- First, to contribute to theory development concerning issue arenas and multi-actor debate.
- Second, to increase the transparency of the human rights debate.

This PhD research is based on theoretical premises and the methodological angle is based on multidisciplinary theory. In each individual study, empirical study has been chosen to further strengthen the theoretical framework of the studies. In the next Section 3.3.1 the research methods are discussed in detail.

3.3.1 Methods

This PhD research connects four individual studies that combine qualitative and quantitative research methods, mainly qualitative and quantitative textual content analysis and interviews. The textual analysis together with content analysis are part of the constructionist approach in this research, which aims to create understanding of how various actors utilize framing to create issue salience in their communicating, and how this contributes to power relations in the networks.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are widely different from one another. Can qualitative and quantitative research methods be used together to strengthen the research and further validate the found results, or are they mutually exclusive methods? The exclusive relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods is as old as the understandable research began, say Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2003: 66). However, according to them there is no clear answer as to whether qualitative and quantitative research methods exclude one another. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are chosen because the purpose is to create a profound theoretical understanding of the research topic. These are suitable methods to be used together since qualitative and quantitative methods often complement each other and offer validation for findings of each method (Brians, Willnat, Manheim, Rich, 2011: 86). The combination of the two research methods is used to answer each research question and to gain additional confirmation of the results. “Both qualitative and quantitative research begin with a research question, because both approaches are designed to produce knowledge of the empirical world” (Brians et al. 2011: 82). Yet it must be stated that qualitative and quantitative research have a key difference. Qualitative research focuses less on testing pre-set theories: “qualitative theories are often elaborated as observations are made” (Brians et al. 2011: 83). This is no obstacle for this research, however, since the purpose is to re-develop theories and not try to prove the accuracy of existing ones.

Though each study has its own research questions, all the studies have the same research approach. First the multidisciplinary literature research is done to form the theoretical frame. Second, the research questions are approached from a mixed method perspective, using primarily a qualitative approach and

methods such as interview and textual analysis, which is used in different ways in the studies.

In Table 6 the data collection methods, description of the data and analysis methods are described, and afterwards examined in more detail study by study in the next section.

TABLE 6 Description of methodology

Studies	
I	
Data collection methods	<p>Qualitative monitoring Quantitative monitoring Interviews Reading</p> <p>Amnesty's and HRW's main websites, Facebook and Twitter pages were monitored for three months, from mid-February to mid-May 2010. Facebook and Twitter pages were visited twice a week, on Monday and Friday. Monitoring was done simultaneously to see whether there were similarities in messages and connections between the three online forums.</p> <p>Two interviews, face-to-face and via phone, with two members of Amnesty Finland.</p>
Description of data	<p>HRW Main web site: www.hrw.org (287 posts), data was formal, lengthy documents, annual and topical reports as PDF files, interviews, videos, and links.</p> <p>Facebook: www.facebook.com/HumanRightsWatch (148 posts), data was short news items, with links to external sites.</p> <p>Twitter: http://twitter.com/hrw (349 tweets), data was short news items and information, only 140 signs allowed.</p> <p>Amnesty Main web site: www.amnesty.org (163 posts), data was formal, lengthy documents, special and topical reports as PDF files, links included in some news, special sections for videos and good news.</p> <p>Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/.../Amnesty.../111658128847068 (126 posts), data was short news items, with links to external sites.</p> <p>Twitter http://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline (260 tweets), data was short news items and information, only 140 signs allowed</p>
Interviews	<p>Two expert-interviews with representatives of Amnesty Finland. The first interview was with an expert in online communication from Amnesty Finland. The interview followed a semi-structured question frame with additional questions asked during the interviews, turning it into a free-flowing discussion. The interview was conducted face-to-face in Amnesty's office in Helsinki Finland; duration 1 hour. It was recorded and</p>

	<p>transcribed afterwards.</p> <p>The second interview was with the executive director of Amnesty Finland; duration 1 hour. The interview was recorded and transcribed afterwards. The researcher served as interviewer. For the purpose of the study the answers were translated.</p>
Analysis methods	Each post on the website, Facebook and Twitter was read.
Qualitative textual content analysis	<p>During the observation period a weekly summary of the content was displayed in a table format using Excel spread sheet software, one file for each organization. The rows mentioned websites, Facebook and Twitter pages.</p> <p>The findings were coded according to groups of variables, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the kind of content found - style of language - how the web platforms were linked - whether discussion was generated among users
Quantitative content analysis	The number of posts on websites and Facebook as well as tweets was counted to further validate the results from the qualitative textual content analysis.
Interviews	The data collected were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed by the researcher focusing on online communication strategies and their relation to achieving the goal of drawing attention to human rights issues.
II	
Data collection methods	<p>Qualitative textual search</p> <p>Quantitative textual search</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>40 scientific papers that focused on human rights issues.</p>
Description of data	<p>Textual analysis of 40 scientific papers. The literature was found by a metasearch via the EBSCO host and adding papers by snowball technique. For the literature search several keywords were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - human rights - human rights NGOs - framing - issue attention <p>No year boundaries were set in the literature search, which was concluded in September 2011.</p>
Quantitative and qualitative textual analysis	The search provided 50 papers that were first scanned to check if the keywords were found. Afterwards 40 papers were deemed suitable for the textual content analysis. Most of the articles, 73 %, had 10 to 29 fragments, while two articles had only one fragment; a total of 500 fragments was entered into the 80 page Word database. The analysis used an adaptation of Hallahan's (1999) seven type of framing as a base for the thematic analysis.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on situations, 112 fragments, 22% 2. Focus on context attributes, 116 fragments, 23% 3. Focus on risky choices, 4 fragments, 1% 4. Focus on actions, 69 fragments, 14% 5. Focus on the kind of issue, 87 fragments, 17% 6. Focus on responsibilities, 79 fragments, 16% 7. Focus on news, 33 fragments, 7% <p>Sum: 500 fragments, 100%</p> <p>The 40 papers came from 23 different journals. The biggest number of articles came from the Human Rights Quarterly, with 11 papers. The second highest number came from the Journal of Conflict Resolution with three articles.</p>
Analysis methods	Each of the 40 papers was read three times and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The seven types of framing served as a coding scheme for both qualitative and quantitative analysis:
Quantitative content analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on situations 2. Focus on context attributes 3. Focus on risky choices 4. Focus on actions 5. Focus on the kind of issue 6. Focus on responsibilities 7. Focus on news. <p>A numerical analysis was done to see how which of the seven framing types were used the most, in percentages and in actual numbers. Numerical tables and pie-charts were formed to present the results.</p>
Qualitative textual content analysis	When a framing type was found, the direct quote was copy pasted into the database. Afterwards the thematic analysis of each framing type was done to see how human rights issues were framed in the literature. The size of a piece of coded text varied from a sentence to a multi-sentence chunk. They were coded by assigning the single most appropriate code in the list. In the study, direct quotes from the articles were provided to further validate the conclusions from the analysis.
III	
Data collection methods	<p>Qualitative monitoring Quantitative monitoring Interview Reading</p> <p>Kony 2012 video, websites of Amnesty and HRW, Interview with HRW Berlin</p>
Description of data	<p>Kony 2012 video, found on Youtube, 30 minute long Invisibe Children website: http://invisiblechildren.com/</p> <p>The posts on the main websites of Amnesty and HRW. The search was conducted in the News sections of amnesty.org and hrw.org using the search bar and the following keywords: - Kony 2012</p>

Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joseph Kony - LRA - Uganda - Invisible Children <p>The timeframe for the monitoring was 18 weeks, commencing with the release of the Kony 2012 video on 5 March 2012, and ending on 9 July 2012. Data comprised statements, news stories and research reports with long narratives illustrated by photographs and video testimony and additional links.</p> <p>Amnesty: 10 posts, 8 different in texts that were included in the analysis. 7 of the 10 posts were made between 8 March and 24 May. HRW: 16 posts, 12 of the 16 posts were made between 9 March and 20 April. The analysis of the 24 responses by the NGOs was conducted by the researcher.</p> <p>A member of the research team of HRW was interviewed face-to-face in HRW's main office in Berlin, Germany on May 2012; the interview lasted 90 minutes, and it was recorded and transcribed.</p>
<p>Analysis methods</p> <p>Qualitative textual content analysis</p> <p>Quantitative content analysis</p>	<p>The 24 responses by the NGOs were read to see if the keywords were found, and each post fitted the chosen timeframe.</p> <p>For each post a summary of the text was written and included in a Word document, which served as a long data extraction table with sections for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - titles - web links the publication dates, - summary of the post. <p>The analysis of the responses focused on how framing was used by Amnesty and HRW, and which related issues were discussed and how Invisible Children was addressed. The interview provided background information for the study.</p> <p>The number of posts by Amnesty and HRW was counted to further validate the results from the quantitative analysis.</p>
IV	
Data collection methods	<p>Qualitative monitoring Quantitative monitoring Reading</p> <p>Official materials from the European Parliament, Amnesty and HRW.</p>
Description of data	<p>Amnesty and HRW</p> <p>The data included all English language documents from two NGOs between years 2011-2012; the timeframe for the searches was 1.1.2011-31.12.2012.</p> <p>The data were collected from the two NGOs' official websites, amnesty.org and hrw.org, using the search bar with the keywords "human trafficking" and "trafficking of/in [humans]".</p>

	<p>All selected data had three criteria to be selected for data analysis: to have at least one sentence about human trafficking, fit the timeframe and match the search words.</p> <p>The search for Amnesty produced a total of 730 results, and 96 final data documents matched criteria. The HRW search provided 1 495 documents, and 122 final data documents matched criteria.</p> <p>The EP The data included all English language documents, from the EP. EP data collection had a longer, three-year, timeframe, spanning 2010-2012, 1.1.2010-31.12.2012. Though the analysis on documents that had been discussed in 2011 and 2012, the search had to cover a period of three years, as the preliminary preparations for topics that were debated and decided on in 2011 or 2012 had started in 2010.</p> <p>First the data was collected from the European Parliament's Legal Observatory website, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/search/search.do, using the keywords: "human trafficking" and "trafficking of/in humans".</p> <p>The data document had to have the labels "Procedure completed" and "Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/ single reading", which meant that the document was a final product of one issue arena discussion and subsequent decision making process.</p> <p>All selected data had three criteria to be selected for data analysis: to have at least one sentence about human trafficking, timeframe and match search words.</p> <p>The search for the EP produced a total 168 documents of which 50 matched the criteria. After discarding doubles, 22 separate documents remained to be included in the analysis.</p> <p>The data of all actors were analyzed in a similar way. After reading the documents, data extraction tables were compiled for each actor. The table had sections for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the title of each document - date of publication and reference number, if available - direct citations on human trafficking and how issue was discussed and framed was underlined - direct citations relating to bandwagoning of the issue <p>The data-extraction table for Amnesty amounted to 53 pages, for HRW 67 pages and for the EP 51 pages.</p>
Analysis methods	The analysis focused on creating the narratives of causal relations, the focus being on the how actors discussed human trafficking, how they formed context for the issue and how framing was done. Additional focus was on bandwagoning of issues, to see which issues were linked in the narratives. In addition, different ways of framing the issue of human trafficking and increasing its salience were noted.
Qualitative textual content analysis	
Quantitative content analysis	The number of the documents was counted to further validate the results from the quantitative analysis.

3.3.2 Qualitative textual content analysis

Qualitative content analysis can be “defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1278). Qualitative textual content analysis is used in all of the four individual studies to analyse large amounts of written content and to manage it for research purposes. Qualitative content analysis is a relevant research method here because the method “allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data” (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008: 108). Content analysis is a suitable research method in this research, since it can be used to analyse research materials gathered by various methods (Skinnari, 2012: 51). Content analysis can be used to analyse material systematically and objectively (Kärkkäinen, 2013: 46). Thus it is a suitable method to analyse official written materials gathered from NGOs’ websites and the documents of the EP, as well as to analyse the materials gathered from the face-to-face and phone interviews with representatives from Amnesty and HRW.

As a method of content analysis, textual analysis is chosen specifically. Human rights issues are social issues. Textual analysis as part of content analysis is a useful tool for analysing social issues (Fairclough, 2003). Textual analysis can be used to see and understand the sense-making of those who produce the texts. There can be similarities or difference between actors’ interpretation of issues and events, and all of them can be accurate and truthful (McKee, 2003), a factor which makes content analysis a dynamic and profound research method when analysing material produced by various actors. In all of the individual studies of this PhD thesis, long quotations from the interviews and various written documents are offered as examples. This is to ensure validity, since the reader has the possibility to view the original research materials from which the conclusions are drawn. Brians et al. (2011: 85) explain that “this is necessary not only to capture the full complexity of the subject matter, but also to give the readers a way to judge the validity of the researcher’s interpretation.” Qualitative content analysis fits the research well, and it is further strengthened by quantitative content analysis.

3.3.3 Quantitative content analysis

Next to qualitative analysis, a quantitative content analysis is beneficial when the aim is to get numerical data for research purposes to further strengthen the findings and conclusions gained from qualitative methods. Quantitative methods emphasize detached observation and documenting phenomena numerically (Brians et al. 2011: 81). Much as suggested by Brians et al. (2011: 85), the numerical results of quantitative research are presented in tables or charts in this research. “Direct and detailed presentations of these data are necessary to make the case for quantitative interpretations being offered” (Brians et al. 2011: 85). Quantitative content analysis was used to further validate results from qualitative analyses. Numerical results provide the readers with a quick way to view

the results and then turn to a qualitative description of the result to reach a more profound explanation. This creates a well-rounded understanding of the research topic and results.

3.3.4 Qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews are beneficial for obtaining direct information from NGOs regarding their organizational strategies, aims and overall values. Qualitative interviews have been used extensively in social sciences as a research method (Kvale, 2007: 5). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2003: 75) mention that the particular benefit of interviews as a research method is flexibility, given that the interviewer can repeat the question, clarify words and misunderstandings, as well as have a discussion with the interviewee. Interviews are also flexible, because additional questions can be asked. Qualitative interviews were a suitable method for two of the studies, given that the aim was to get insight directly from the point of view of the NGOs regarding their organizational strategies, agenda setting, framing, advocacy work and power relations in human rights networks.

Qualitative interviews have been used widely as a research methodology in previous studies on social sciences and political science as well on particularly in human rights studies (Mendelson, 2005; Nikolić-Ristanović, 2012; Kamler, 2013; Skinnari, 2012). Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2003: 75) note that the most important aspect of an interview is to get as much information as possible from the interview subject. When formulating a frame for the interviews the researcher needs to take into account the content, the form, the format, the wording and the order of questions. "The content of the questions determines what information can be obtained from responses" (Brians et al. 2011: 155), as well as how the questions are presented to the interviewees and answered (Brians et al. 2011: 157). Qualitative interviews, also conducted via phone, are a useful method, given that they provide a possibility to ask about meaningful values and experiences of the interviewees (Stephens, 2007: 205). The in-depth face-to-face and phone interviews with Amnesty's representatives and the face-to-face interview with an HRW representative provided general background data for this research. Although the PhD research is a theoretical study with less focus on interviews, interviews did provide useful and essential data for two of the studies as well as for the thesis shell as a whole.

3.4 Methods by studies

This PhD research comprises four individual studies that combine qualitative and quantitative research methods. In Table 6 in Section 3.3.1 the data collection methods, the description of the data and the analysis methods are described in brief. Next, each section provides a more detailed description study by study.

3.4.1 Study I

In Study I qualitative and quantitative content analysis is used next to interviews. The research methods are used to analyse the main websites and the social media sites Facebook and Twitter of Amnesty and HRW. The research questions can be found in Table 5. The purpose of selecting content analysis was to understand certain communication strategies used by NGOs in the online environment and their overall organizational strategies in human rights work. Material for the analyses was gathered by monitoring the selected online forums for three months from mid-February to mid-May 2010. For both NGOs all content of the three online platforms was monitored simultaneously for the purpose of seeing whether there were similarities in the messages and connections between the three online forums. The researcher's role in relation to the research topic was silent and non-participatory.

During the monitoring period a weekly summary of the content was displayed in a table format using Excel spread sheet software, with one file for each organization. The websites, Facebook and Twitter pages were in rows while the above-mentioned groups of variables formed the columns of the Excel file. The observations were made to describe the online communication activities of HRW and Amnesty International, and see how social media activities created interaction on human rights issues and how/if at all the NGOs used the online tools for agenda-setting purposes. The findings were counted and coded according to groups of variables for further analysis, focusing on:

- the kind of content found
- style of language
- how the web platforms were linked
- whether discussion was generated among users.

In Study I, a third key research method was qualitative interviews. Semi-structured theme interviews (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009: 75) were used to interview two expert representatives from Amnesty Finland. As Tuomi and Sarajärvi state, this method is used to focus on pre-set themes and specifying follow-up questions, which was highly suitable for Study I, since the purpose was to gain insight knowledge on organizational strategies and how online means were utilized regarding human rights advocacy work and agenda setting on human rights issues, a core organization activity of Amnesty.

The first interview with an expert in online communication from Amnesty Finland was carried out in Amnesty's office in Helsinki in May 2010. The second interview with the executive director of Amnesty Finland was done by phone in the same month. Both interviews followed the same pre-set semi-structured question frame, which was additionally supplemented with follow-up and in-depth questions in order to gain more insight and to clarify previous answers and issues discussed. The interviews followed three main parts called sets. These sets had their own themes which were the overall focus sets of the questions in that particular set:

- Part 1. NGO and PR / agenda setting – set: basics
- Part 2. NGO's agenda setting and online communication – set: online
- Part 3. NGO and their environment – set: society.

These three sets presented the focus of the questions in each part. The first set of questions focused on the public relations (PR) and agenda setting of Amnesty. The detailed questions in set Basic focused on the process, tactics and the usage of PR and agenda setting in Amnesty's organizational pursuits in advocating human rights. The set Online focused on agenda setting in the online environment in relation to human rights advocacy work. The set Society focused on NGOs and their operations and role at grassroots level, focusing also on Amnesty's role in political decision making. In Appendix 1 the semi-structured theme scheme is shown.

The question-frame was sent to the interviewees beforehand by email. Both interviews started as semi-structured interviews, where direct questions were asked from the question frame, resulting in a free-flowing discussion between the interviewer and interviewee. Although Briens et al. (2011: 155-156) state that personal interviews should not last longer than 45 minutes and telephone interviews only 20 minutes, both of the interviews in this study lasted for one hour. The interviews were recorded for research purposes only, with the consent of the interviewees. After each interview, the interview recordings were transcribed by the researcher.

3.4.2 Study II

Study II focused on the framing of human rights issues in scientific literature. The purpose was to how see which types of framing were used in human rights issues and how framing was used to increase issue salience. The textual content analysis used an adaptation of Hallahan's (1999) seven types of framing as a basis for the thematic analysis: see Appendix 2. The results from the qualitative thematic analysis were further strengthened by quantitative thematic analysis.

A literature analysis of 40 scientific papers was done. The literature was found by metasearch via the EBSCO host in September 2011. The snowball technique was used to add papers. Search keywords used were:

- human rights
- human rights NGOs
- framing
- issue attention.

The search initially provided 50 papers that were checked to ensure that one of the keywords and human rights related content were found. Afterwards 40 papers were deemed suitable for the textual content analysis. Selected papers came from 23 different journals. The biggest number of articles came from the Human Rights Quarterly, with 11 papers. After the search was made and the papers were selected for the analysis, each of the 40 papers was read and thor-

oughly analyzed. In the analysis, framing and human rights issues were described. Hallahan's seven type of framing were applied on social issues and as a qualitative and quantitative coding scheme. All the text fragments showing issue framing were copied into the database and coded according to the type of framing utilized. The size of the copied text varied from a single sentence to a multi-sentence chunk. A total of 500 fragments were entered into the 80 page long Word document database. The number of times a frame was found matching one of the types was counted to see which framing types had highest percentages in usage. A pie chart and table were made that recorded the number of incidences of each framing type for quantitative analysis, and in particular to record which framing types were used most related to human rights issues.

3.4.3 Study III

Study III focused on how the gatekeepers responded to a new actor in the human rights network, and particularly how the gatekeeper NGOs, Amnesty and HRW, responded to a newer NGO, called Invisible Children (IC), and its Kony 2012 campaign. An online study was selected and the responses of the two gatekeepers were monitored. The qualitative method was utilized and quantitative content analysis was carried out to further validate the results. The data search was conducted in the News sections of *amnesty.org* and *hrw.org* using the search bar and the following keywords:

- Kony 20127
- Joseph Kony
- LRA
- Uganda
- Invisible Children.

The timeframe for the observations was 18 weeks, from 5 March to 9 July 2012. The analysis was limited to posts on the main websites, though additional posts were made in the blogs of Amnesty and HRW or on their other social media pages. The textual content analysis was made by looking at the framing used by the two gatekeepers.

After the data were gathered, each selected post was first read carefully, to see if the keywords were found and that the post fitted the timeframe. Second, for each post a summary of the text was written and included in a Word document, which served as a long data extraction table with the publication dates, titles, and web links. The analysis of the responses focused on how framing was used by Amnesty and HRW, which related issues were discussed, and how IC was addressed. Additionally, a qualitative semi-structured interview (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009: 75) was used as a research method to gain background information and insight on HRW's organizational strategies relating to human rights NGO's work, agenda setting, framing and strategies as a gatekeeper NGO in relation to other actors in the networks. The interview took place in HRW's main office in Berlin, Germany on May 2012. The semi-structured ques-

tion frame: see Appendix 3, had five different parts. Each of the parts had its own specific focuses, which were called sets:

- HRW and agenda setting/framing
- Issue adoption
- Human Rights Watch and societal role
- Power-relations
- Human rights.

Each of the sets had multiple questions. The first part focused on HRW's agenda setting and framing, as well as on the process behind these tasks. The second part focused on the process of issue adoption in which various matters may affect the process, such as the environment, other issues and actors. Additionally the cost-effectiveness and time-frame of issue adoption and framing were discussed. The third part focused on HRW's role in society, including the different ways of operating in various environments and with various actors. The fourth part focused on HRW and power in relations with other actors and collaborations, and the credibility and legitimacy of actors. The fifth part focused specifically on HRW and human rights as issues, how the organization sees violations and how violations should be tackled with. Additionally the sixth and last part focused on future challenges in the human rights field.

Similarly to Study I, the question frame was sent to the interviewee beforehand by email. The interview started as semi-structured interviews, where direct questions were asked from the question frame, resulting in a free-flowing discussion between the interviewer and interviewee. The interview lasted 90 minutes. The interview was recorded for research purposes with the consent of the interviewee. Afterwards the interview recordings were transcribed.

3.4.4 Study IV

Study IV focused on how three gatekeepers, Amnesty, HRW and the European Parliament, create causal relations and thus contexts, by framing human trafficking in their official documents. Qualitative textual analysis was used as a primary research method. In today's world many official documents and information sources are available online, so the official materials from the three actors could be found online for research purposes.

Qualitative textual analysis was used to analyse all content from Amnesty's and HRW's official websites. First, the data were collected from *amnesty.org* and *hrw.org*, to find all the available documents in English. The documents were searched using the search bar using the keywords "*human trafficking*" and "*trafficking off/in [humans]*". To be able to find enough material, the content included documents of two full years before the search was done, with the timeframe for the searches being 1.1.2011-31.12.2012.

There were three criteria for selecting material for analysis. The timeframe formed the first criterion. The second criterion was that the selected materials had to include a mention of "*human trafficking*" or "*trafficking off/in humans*". The

third criterion was that the selected documents had to include at least one sentence about human trafficking, given that a simple two-word mention of human trafficking was not deemed to provide real data for answering the research questions of Study IV.

Textual analysis was used for the materials of the European Parliament gathered. The EP data collection had a longer, three-year timeframe, spanning 1.1.2010-31.12.2012. Although the analysis covered topics that had been debated and decided on in 2011 or 2012, the discussion had often started in 2010. The data was collected from the European Parliament's Legal Observatory website, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/search/search.do>, using the keywords: "human trafficking" and "trafficking off/in humans". There were three criteria for selecting material for the analysis. The first was the timeframe for the debate, 2010-2012. The second criterion was that each English language PDF document had to have the labels "Procedure completed" and "Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/ single reading", which meant that the document belonged to a final product of a one issue arena debate. The third criterion was that each document had to have the search words "human trafficking" or "trafficking off/in humans" in the document and at least one sentence about human trafficking, as explained in the analysis of the documents of the NGOs.

The search for documents of Amnesty produced a total of 730 results, with 96 final data documents matching the criteria, whereas the HRW search produced 1 495 documents, with 122 final data documents matching the criteria. The search for the EP produced a total 168 documents of which 50 matched the criteria. After discarding doubles, 22 separate documents remained to be included in the analysis. The data documents of all the actors were analyzed in a similar way. After reading the documents multiple times, data extraction tables were compiled for each actor. At the first reading, the title of each document was copied into the table along with the date of publication and the reference number, if available. This was done to facilitate retrieval of the document for further examination. At the second reading, direct citations on human trafficking were underlined in order to return to them later in the analytical stage. The direct citations were then copied into the data extraction tables. At the third reading all the citations relating to bandwagoning of the issue were also copied into the data-extraction tables under each document title, to create an overview of narratives addressing human trafficking, frames and bandwagoned issues.

4 FINDINGS OF THE STUDIES

The focus of this PhD thesis research was on the function of framing as a strategic tool in the process where issues are constructed as being salient in the human rights debate. Human rights issues are important global social issues that attract various viewpoint and actors, resulting in power-plays between actors, making it hard to find consensus. The overall purpose of this research was two-fold:

- First, to contribute to theory development concerning multi-actor-debate in issue arenas
- Second, to contribute to the transparency of the human rights debate.

The aim of the PhD thesis was to enhance, from a constructionist approach, the understanding of how framing is used as a strategic tool to create issue salience in human rights issues and how this contributes to power relations in the actor networks involved. The thesis presents a qualitative model of the process describing how salience in these issues is created by actors in a multi-actor issue arena debate. During the various parts of the research, attention was paid to strategic framing choices by actors in communication that may turn issue arena debates and subsequent final decision making process into competition over power-positions. The four individual studies were based on a multidisciplinary theoretical framework and empirical studies were chosen to further strengthen theoretical framework of each study.

The main overarching result from each of the individual studies is that NGOs operate in networks and battle for power positions, with strategic agenda setting and framing as part of this process. The main result indicates that framing is used as a strategic tool to create issue salience for human rights issues in a selective manner. Not all issues, contexts or actors are equally important or salient.

This research illustrates that when operating in issue arenas, actors react to the framing and other communicative actions of other actors. Therefore, in the interaction, negotiation of meaning, collaboration, competition and disregard-

ing occurred. Additionally, different actors put different causal relations forward that explained what led to the issue and contributed to the continuation of the problems. In various studies it was shown that causal chains shaped the understanding of events, and a particular causal chain was emphasized when framing the issues. Examples of these are for example in Study III. Gatekeeper actors had a different understanding of the Kony 2012 campaign, its benefits and of IC as an NGO. The two gatekeepers had different interpretations of events and solutions to the human rights violations at hand from the less central actor IC. In a similar way, Study IV illustrated how three gatekeeper actors created causal chains by linking issues, actors and events to human trafficking, creating causal chains of events and actors involved in the cycle that trafficking is part of. Next the key results of each individual study are presented and discussed.

4.1 Study I

Study I focused on two human rights NGOs Amnesty and HRW and how these NGOs used communication and agenda setting on the internet to further their policies on human rights. The study contributed to the theories of agenda setting, framing and human rights as well as NGO-related literature.

TABLE 7 Result focus of Study I

Study I. Agenda setting Human rights NGOs Online communication	Study II. Framing social issues Framing typology Saliency
Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks Framing by NGOs Kony 2012 - campaign	Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues Framing context Human trafficking Integral approach

The theoretical frame from Study I constructed a connection between human rights, human rights actors and in particular NGOs, their agenda setting and how it is used in the online environment to draw attention to human rights issues internationally. The empirical findings show that the NGOs placed much emphasis on online activities. To encourage people to support their cause and ensure that their messages are heard by decision makers, both Amnesty and HRW make intensive use of the internet to further their organizational goals.

Amnesty's and HRW's platforms were updated continuously and carefully linked in a multi-platform strategy. In this way, Study I contributed to the understanding of how the online forums were combined to form a one agenda-setting unity by human rights NGOs. The results show that social media provide rapid information about new activities, motivate involvement and invite users to access the website for more detailed information. Amnesty also promoted activism next to research in its online forums, whereas HRW focused primarily on research and influencing the policy making. The interviewees confirm that Amnesty uses multi-platform tactics online. The main sites are used as databases for all the information, while the Facebook and Twitter pages are used for quick reactions on topical issues.

Based on the results it can be said that Amnesty and HRW are clearly both aware that they need to involve a wider audience to put human rights issues high on the agenda in issue arenas. This explains why they prioritize online communication and pay much attention to it, using multi-platform strategies that carefully inter-relate the information on their main web sites and in social media such as Facebook and Twitter in pursuits of making human rights issues salient. The results of the first study presented the connection between agenda setting and framing in NGOs' external communication in issue arenas, an issue which was continued in Study II.

4.2 Study II

Study II focused on human rights as social issues and how they may be framed in public debate. The study was based on the seven types of framing identified by Hallahan (1999) and after applying the types on social issues, scrutinized which of these types is utilized, and how this is done, in the case of human rights issues. The purpose of the theoretical frame was to construct a connection between framing typology, human rights issues and issue salience. This study illustrated that framing can be used to increase issue salience, more specifically showing *how* strategic framing could be used to create issue salience in the debate over human rights issues by emphasising certain aspects of issues and/or actors as well as events by using framing. The study contributed to the understanding of the framing of human rights issues.

TABLE 8 Result focus of study II

Study I. Agenda setting Human rights NGOs Online communication	Study II. Framing social issues Framing typology Saliency
Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks Framing by NGOs Kony 2012 - campaign	Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues Framing context Human trafficking Integral approach

The findings of Study II show that all seven framing types of Hallahan were found indicating that different aspects of human rights issues are emphasized, though in very different numbers. However, the most common were the *framing of attributes* in which the economic or cultural context was emphasized, and also the framing of situations, pointing out power differences between the actors.

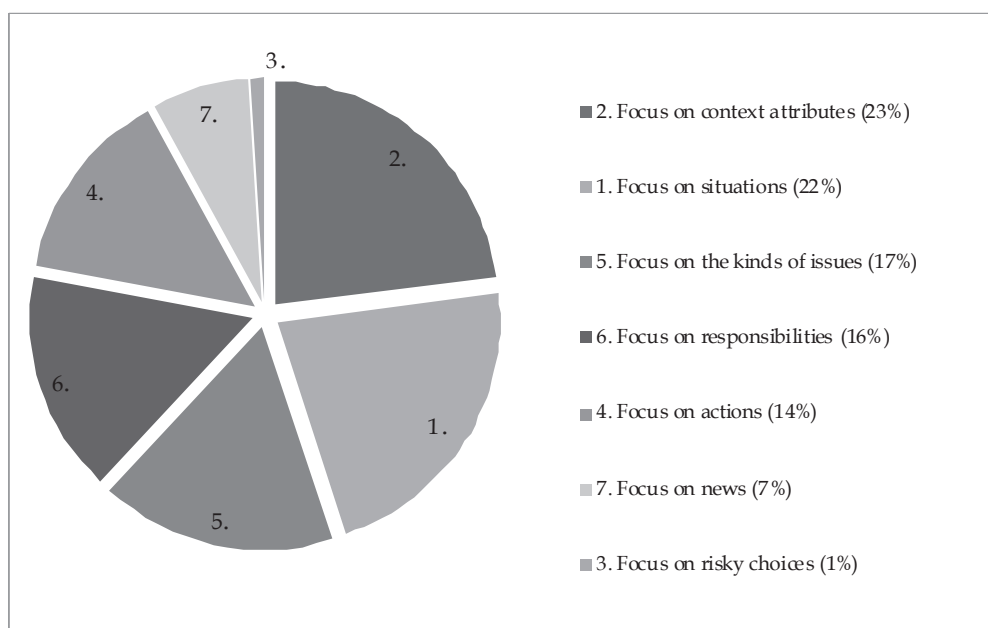


FIGURE 2 Results from Study II

According to the thematic analyses, all together 500 framing examples were found in the 40 scientific articles. The large number of framing fragments found in the articles showed that the more general types of framing also occur in hu-

man right issues. The results of Study II indicated that framing is used in human rights issues. The context of human rights issues and the actors involved are frequently addressed in the literature, while other aspects, such as news or risks, are addressed less often.

The study provided a better understanding of the processes of issue framing which aims to make issues appear as salient in the issue arena debate in the context of human rights. It illustrated that previously traditional framing types, perhaps only regarded relevant for PR purposes, were used on in a human rights context as well. This implies that traditional framing can and is used in the debate of human rights in international arenas, which in turn suggests selectivity in the human rights debate. The results of Study II offered a broad overview of cases, yielding different viewpoints. If the goal is to gain salience for human rights over a long period of time, it seems probable that not all issues can be framed in the same manner, and with time particular issues may need new frames to render them salient again. Based on the results, it should be noted that not all instances of framing will be intentional and that framing cannot be avoided, as all storylines are the outcome of a process of selection. Insight into the complexity of framing processes adds to awareness by actors and in this way contributes to decision making on the organizational communication strategies to be deployed in the issue arena.

The results of Study II indicate that using frames that resonate with public perceptions may help in achieving issue salience. Since human rights issues are sensitive, the frame needs to be chosen carefully and can be of strategic value in power relations, as was to be focused on in Study III.

4.3 Study III

The Study III focused on how the gatekeepers Amnesty and HRW responded to a new actor IC and its Kony 2012 campaign by framing. The study contributed to the understanding of power relations in the human rights network between gatekeepers and less central actors.

TABLE 9 Result focus of Study III

Study I. Agenda setting Human rights NGOs Online communication	Study II. Framing social issues Framing typology Salience
Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks Framing by NGOs Kony 2012 - campaign	Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues Framing context Human trafficking Integral approach

The results of Study III show that Amnesty and HRW responded similarly to IC's agenda. The less-central actor IC was able to stimulate attention by its Kony 2012 campaign. It was able to momentarily influence power relations by producing new ideas and content. Yet established human rights actors were quick to maintain their power-positions as gatekeepers by using framing. Even though, as a result, power relations remained unchanged, Study III illustrated that social media may lower the threshold for new actors, such as IC, to share official information and aim to obtain a position in the network, even changing power relations in the network. The study III illustrated that IC created a relatable message over the issue of capturing Joseph Kony by generating awareness with their energetic online campaign, no doubt aimed at young people. However the enthusiasm and naïve approach was quickly criticized by the two gatekeepers Amnesty and HRW, which in turn took over the issue and started using power inside the network to frame the issue suitable for their agendas. The results also found support for the gatekeeper theory. The findings indicate that although IC, by bringing a fresh perspective to issues connected to warlord Joseph Kony, was able to force the central hub to also address the campaign, the central human rights actors succeeded in remaining gatekeepers and shared power only to a limited degree.

4.4 Study IV

The focus of Study IV was on how three gatekeepers, Amnesty, HRW and the European Parliament address human trafficking in communication. The focus was on the narratives used by major well established human rights and political actors to give meaning to events, by for example explaining causal reasoning and arguing for the importance of the topic and actions to be undertaken, such as the formation of new policies and laws in the EU. The study contributed to the understanding of the interrelatedness of issues and how context is created in the debate over human rights issues.

TABLE 10 Result focus of study IV

Study I. Agenda setting Human rights NGOs Online communication	Study II. Framing social issues Framing typology Salience
Study III. Gatekeeping and power relations in the NGO networks Framing by NGOs Kony 2012 - campaign	Study IV. Interrelatedness of issues Framing context Human trafficking Integral approach

The findings of Study IV show that the two human rights organizations and the EP address human trafficking, though in different degrees, by intertwining it with many other issues such as gender inequality and poverty, cross border crime networks, various forms of sexual and labour exploitation, organ harvesting, cycles of re-victimization, democratic development and the EU's external relations as well as failed states and climate change. All the actors emphasized cause and effect by creating causal chains of various events, issues and actors. Responsibility framing was used to create causal relationships between actors, issues and events, such as creating a causal chain between poverty, climate change, migration and trafficking to various forms of exploitation and re-victimization, as well as naming those responsible, such as corrupt governments, authorities and criminal networks. The results indicate that the dynamic interrelatedness of issues and actors should be understood, to address the root causes of any social problem. Consequently, the results highlighted how the context in which issues are debated, and the way in which issues are framed, affect the climate for policy and law formation. Nowadays, various actors are part of this debate and related policy and law formulation, such as NGOs acting as experts to decision makers. Thus it is important to see how both well-known NGOs and the EP as an established political actor discuss and frame the issue, and in what context they place it, as shown in Study IV.

5 DISCUSSION

The debate concerning human rights issues is complex and multiple actors can participate. Powerful gatekeepers are more able to set the agenda and, as a consequence, the debate may follow the agenda setting and framing of the gatekeepers (Lewin, 1947; Bob, 2009; Carpenter 2010, 2011; Bennett, Foot and Xenos, 2011; Steinberg, 2011; Davis and Murdie, 2012; Meriläinen and Vos, 2013). Thus, important alternative viewpoints and issues may be missing from the debate (Meriläinen and Vos, 2014) thereby influencing the course of the debate and subsequent decision making, making the process less transparent. At times human rights are merely paid lip service to, or debated only selectively. In the debate a variety of interactions such as negotiation of meaning, collaboration, competition and disregarding may occur. There is not just one voice found in human rights debates (Okin, 1998; Marsh and Payne; 2007; Schott, 2011). Consensus may not always be found among actors, even NGOs (Bob, 2012; Pallas and Urpelainen, 2013).

This thesis focused on the assumption that framing is used in the process of constructing issue salience. The overall purpose of this research was two-fold:

- First, to contribute to theory development concerning multi-actor-debate in issue arenas
- Second, to contribute to the transparency of the human rights debate.

The PhD thesis enhances the multidisciplinary understanding of how framing is used as a strategic tool to create issue salience by studying the concepts of agenda setting, framing and power relations in the context of human rights debate. This research provides new multidisciplinary theoretical insights on how actors behave in issue arena debates and how they make strategic choices. The results support the notion that the debate over social issues such as human rights is influenced by various strategic choices and not carried out by a single actor or in a single arena. The results indicate that actors, frames and issues intertwine, as shown in the Figure 3, where the structure of issue arena debates

and networks may be seen. Actors can debate multiple issues on various issue arenas and can belong to various networks. Yet not all actors debate in the same issue arenas or belong to the same networks.

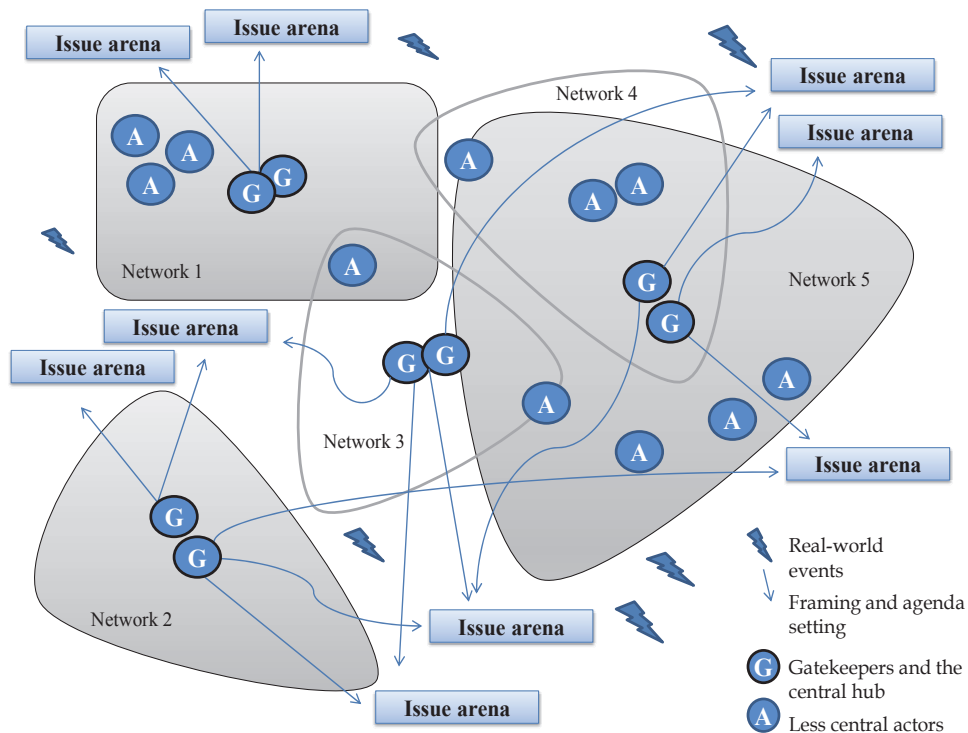


FIGURE 3 Issue arenas and networks

In the debate on issue arenas, actors react to other actors, turning the debate into a game-like situation of reacting. It is often selective by nature. The selectiveness drives actors to seek salience for their particular agendas. The results of this research indicate that when setting the agenda for the issue arena debates, actors react to arguments, decisions and actions made by other actors by counter framing. Therefore this study contributes to the multidisciplinary literature by illustrating that framing is thus used as *the move* in the game situation, which is the debate. As a result interactions, negotiations of meanings and causal relations, and competitions, as well as the disregarding of issues, frames and actors, all occur.

The results of all four individual studies confirm the idea that actors, who participate in the debate or want to become part of the debate and subsequent decision making, cannot focus on all the issues they would prefer to prioritize as agendas, illustrating the selective nature of issue arena debates discussed by

Downs (1972); Henry and Gordon (2001) and Dahre (2010). Due to the selective realities of actors' ability to focus on all the issues and limited carrying capacities of actors' and arenas (Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988), issues undergo a process of ranking that may, for example, be based on cost-benefit analysis (Pallas et al. 2012) prior to agenda setting. Some issues are ranked more important, more salient than others. As this research demonstrates, by using framing some issues are promoted to the debate while others may be kept out of the debate by the actors. In this way agenda setting is a zero-sum game (Zhu, 1992): when at a certain moment in time one issue is promoted to the debate as salient via a particular frame, another issue at that moment is not, nor are other frames. The zero-sum feature is a reality in that particular moment in that particular issue arena. While some issues and frames, for example causal relations (Vilka, 2007) which provide the contexts, are not pushed forward as salient by one actor, they can be pushed forward by another actor in the same or in a different arena simultaneously, or by the same actor later on. So the zero-sum principle does not permanently describe the debate. The issue arena debate is in reality dynamic and complex. This description can be made since in issue arenas there may be various understandings of issues that are discussed, numerous frames involved and the actors who debate can change quickly in unpredictable ways.

The results of this research confirm the idea discussed by Entman (1993), Vliegenthart and van Zoonen (2011) that often consensus in the debate on issues and frames may not be found. Various actors may have a different understanding of which issues and frames should be regarded as salient and in what contexts the debate should occur. Moreover, this study further adds to the understanding that consensus on causal relations or preferable actions, or who are legitimate actors, may be missing. Because of these aspects, power (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Pettigrew, 1972; Lukes, 1974; Knoke, 1993; Anton, 2007; Barzilai-Nahon, 2008), becomes a key issue in the debate and it characterizes the network relations.

Much as in the discussion by Barzilai-Nahon (2008), Carpenter (2010, 2011), Bennett, Foot and Xenos (2011), Bob (2012), Pallas and Urpelainen (2013), the results of this research indicate that not all actors have the same amount of power in the debate. Some actors are central gatekeepers who form the central hub and some actors are less central. The power of gatekeepers is a characteristic they have. Such power can be manifested in forms of information, high quality research, more educated and culturally knowledgeable staff, funding, credibility, legitimacy, and the ability to manage organizational operations. Gatekeepers can set the tone of the debate and dominate the networks as key actors. They have a great influence on which issues are debated, via what frames, and by whom in the issue arena. This study contributes to the understanding that having a better position, credibility and legitimacy helps being able to set the agenda in the issue arena.

However, the position of the gatekeeper may change as power relations can be altered by using strategic communication strategies, of which framing is an essential aspect. Different actors try to gain a better power position, or to

secure their existing one, by promoting favourable issues with suitable frames and keeping unfavourable frames, issues and contexts out of the debate. Issue framing is an essential tool in this process of creating strategies to increase issue salience, and consequently to achieve one's goals by promoting favourable issues and frames. This is also a reality in the debate on human rights, and makes power relations dynamic in the debate over human rights.

During this research, it became evident that there is indeed a process that is used to construct issue salience in the human rights debate. The four individual studies provided ingredients for the model of the process which will be presented in the next chapter. The model is based on key notions derived from the results of the four studies. First, human rights are in reality not as universal as they are often considered to be. Some rights are regarded as more important than others by actors in the issue arena, illustrating selectivity in the human rights debate right from the start, as was discussed also by Muchlinski (2001), Dahre (2010) and Leppänen (2011). This means that some human rights issues are debated while others do not receive the same amount of attention. Second, all actors, traditional political decision makers and NGOs alike, use framing in the human rights debate to construct issue and actor salience and to create causal relations, and thus context. Often the debate focuses on salience as set by the framing used by the gatekeepers, who in the human rights debate are often human rights NGOs, key states or multistate organizations such as the UN or the EU. Third, in the debate framing is also used to block certain issues, actors and viewpoints such as causal relations that are not considered favourable by the gatekeepers. This can be counteracted by less central actors using communication strategies including framing and creating competing alliances and networks.

Given the selective nature of the debate and the power relations between actors, gatekeepers may not always focus on the most horrendous human rights violations, but rather on those issues which affirm their position and credibility as a gatekeeper in the network. Serious human rights violations, or new issues in need of being regarded as human rights, may not be viewed as salient by actors, for example by the gatekeepers, given that their focus and resources are aimed at other issues which they regard as salient. Also, some issues may intentionally be kept out of the discussion, such as issues seen as unfavourable, too costly or not feasible to be solved. This may lead to the situation where issues are not addressed in the debated and subsequent decision making, especially if not given the attention of the gatekeepers. As a result, these issues may not be resolved in the legislative process. Consequently, serious human rights violations may not be tackled, or new issues may not be accepted as rights issues. However, as multiple issue arenas can be involved, the choice of a different arena and, for example, innovative use of social media activities may open possibilities to -at least for some time- create attention, which shows that issue arenas are dynamic.

This research illustrated how framing is used in the human rights debate increase or decrease issue salience, and to be an influence in power relations in

networks formed by actors. Framing creates causal relations and, therefore, context for the human rights debate. The selective strategic framing processes were opened up in order to make issue arena debate over human rights issues more transparent. The selective nature and the process of making strategic choices may not yet be fully understood by the various actors involved.

In the literature the selectiveness of the framing process was addressed by various actors (Benford, 1997; Lecheler and De Vreese, 2010). Power relations and the role of gatekeepers were discussed in network theory (Carpenter, 2007, 2011; Bob, 2009, 2005). In the case of human rights issues often a legal perspective is chosen in which the importance of such matters may be undervalued. In this PhD thesis the studies prove the relevance of such insights for the human rights debate and consequent decision and law making.

The problem in the issue arena discussions and subsequent decision making processes concerning human rights may be that some of the more severe issues do not receive enough salience or are seen as being too complex to tackle. Understanding the game situation of the debate and the causal relations between issues, actors and events created by framing is needed in order to create real world solutions to human rights violations.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Main insights

This PhD thesis focused on the strategic use of framing to create salience in the multi-actor debate over human rights. The results add to the understanding of framing and agenda setting processes undertaken by actors prior to and during the debates in issue arenas and of the strategic choices made by actors in agenda setting and framing as they relate to power relations in the networks. The results are formulated into a multidisciplinary theoretical model of the framing processes.

The results of this PhD thesis tell us that actors debate and make decisions concerning issues in issue arenas. These actors form networks. Issue arenas and networks intertwine. Actors can belong to multiple networks and contribute to discussion in various issue arenas. Not all actors belong to the same networks or discuss in the same issue arenas. What this tells us about the structure of the debate is that competition may arise concerning how and in what context issues are debated, and by whom, and it may subsequently create power relations, making some actors gatekeepers and some less central.

Human rights issues are considered universal and should be salient from the start. However, the debate in issue arenas is influenced by selectiveness and power relations. The premise of any debate is to make issues salient for various actors. This calls for the issues to be *regarded* as salient, given that issues are not salient in themselves. If issues are not regarded as salient, they won't be picked up in the debate and subsequently decided upon. What this research tells us is that with the usage of strategic framing in communication by actors, different actors can push and pull issues and frames to and from the debate and create different causal relations between issues and actors, thereby creating the context in which issues are debated. The results of the studies can be brought together in a model that clarifies the framing process in issue arena debates.

6.2 The model

This research presents a qualitative theoretical model of the process describing how salience of issues is created by actors in multi-actor debate on human rights issues. The debate in an issue arena is a game situation of reacting and anticipating. What the model shows about human rights debate is that issues and frames for issues are strategically selected. In the model, attention is paid to strategic choices concerning framing by actors when communicating in issue arenas. It illustrates how selective strategic framing is used as a tool in creating salience, and context with causal relations, and how issues and frames may be selected to further a certain goal, an endgame. The model creates more transparency at the first level of issue arena debate - issue selection and framing - by making the game situation of reacting and anticipating known to various actors.

Indeed, transparency is enhanced by clarifying the processes in which framing and issue selection is used, and the selective nature of debates is opened up to be evaluated and further investigated in the future. The model is presented next.

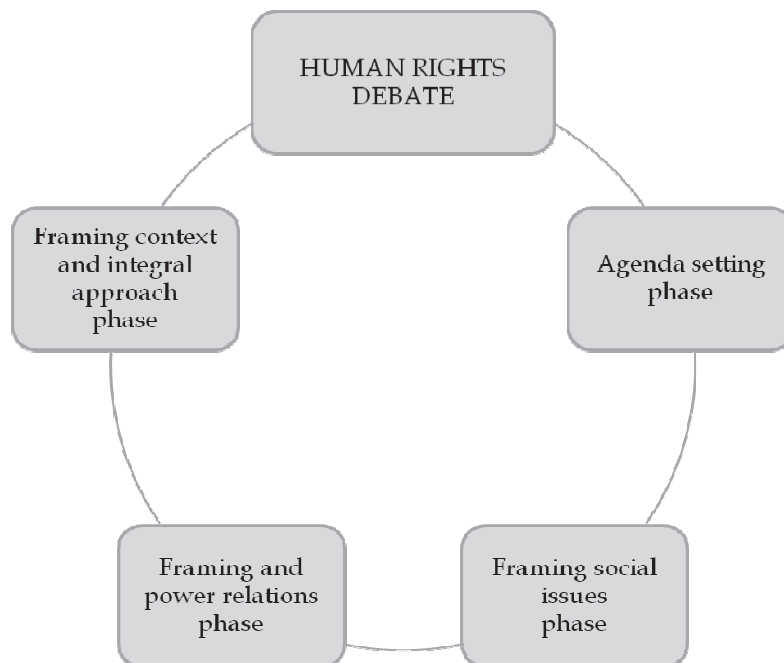


FIGURE 4 The Model of strategic issue arena debate

In the model, there are four (4) phases that are tightly coupled with one another. The model connects to human rights debate in issue arenas, presented in the model at the top.

- 1) The first phase in the model is the *agenda setting phase*. In this phase the issues are evaluated prior to being set as agendas. This is a selective phase: some issues are chosen as part of the agenda and some not. At this stage, actors evaluate the cost benefits of selecting certain issues for the debate, make issue management analyses and evaluate the carrying capacities of themselves as actors and of the issue arenas. Additionally, in this stage actors view what other issues are debated in relevant issue arenas, get to know the other actors already participating and their previous framing choices. In this stage actors *prepare* to initiate communication and/or react to other actors and their framing in issue arenas.
- 2) The second phase in the model is the *phase of framing social issues*. In this phase the favourable and most suitable frames are selected for each issue that is to be debated and for each issue arena. Actors can choose an existing frame already used in issue arena(s) or compile a completely new frame(s). Additionally, multiple frames or issues can be combined together to ensure maximum salience. In this stage actors can also decide whether to seek cooperation with other actors. In this stage actors *start to promote* their issues with selected frames to issue arenas.
- 3) The third phase is the *framing and power-relations phase*. In this phase framing is occurring and issues are already being debated, or not debated, as the case may be. However, framing has not stopped. Power relations have been formed in the network or are forming between actors. At this stage actors are actively reacting to other actors and the game situation of framing has been established in issue arenas. Consequently actors continuously build new frames, use re-framing, and create causal relations. Also, co-operations occur or are blocked intentionally by actors who wish to maintain or better their own position in the network. In this stage the *qualitative game situation* is clearly visible.
- 4) The fourth phase is the *framing context and integral causal approach – phase*. At this phase the gatekeepers are known and power-positions are established. In this phase, framing is done to create context for issues by forming causal relations between issues, events and actors. This may make the issue discussion easier to follow for other actors, thus making the issues easily debatable. This can include using naming-and-shaming framing, or creating causal connections between political decisions and events such as climate change and human rights

violations. This phase of the debate usually brings views on who the good and bad guys are in the situation involved. Moreover, this stage influences the debate and subsequent decision making, and gatekeepers try to control it by using various power resources. At this stage, a more profound understanding of issues may have been created by strategic framing. The next step would be for issues to be taken to the political decision-making process, e.g. in parliament, if enough consensus on context and frames has been agreed upon by actors.

One has to remember that this model is theoretical. Issue arenas are fluid. A solid model cannot be formulated given that the debate on human rights issues is not static and does not follow a linear timeline. Some issues may be debated heavily and are taken to the political decision making sooner than others, while other issues may (at one particular moment) be dropped from the debate if other issues are regarded as more salient. Issue arena debates and decision making do not happen in a short period of time. The model describes the strategic process, which may take place over a long period of time. Frames and actors can rise to and fall from the debate at any time. Further it is important to understand that sense-making and real-world events can influence the debate and decision-making processes. Real-world events such as the Arab Spring or economic crises, climate change and wars can influence how issues are seen, and may create unexpected frames and contexts that had not been specifically designed or selected by any actor. When an unexpected event occurs, an earthquake for example, it starts a causal chain of events that may not be strategically planned or prepared for by any actor. When a real world event occurs, actors - gatekeepers and the less central alike - may feel compelled to address the issues and only then does the strategic framing start to happen, as shown in Study IV.

This research illustrates that it is important to understand that human rights issues are highly sensitive. Human rights violations are horrendous. Yet for some they are not important or less important than related interests. Peoples' values, beliefs and sense-making guide their understanding of human rights issues. Moreover, actors participating in the decision making are human beings and therefore emotions can also play a role in human rights work, debates and decision making. Political debate and decision making is not limited to political facts. Human rights debates are not only about human rights facts, but include strategic communication choices.

With the model, a more profound understanding of the phases in the process of agenda setting and framing is created, which in turn affects the consequent decision-making stages. With the understanding, the transparency of the debate increases, in terms of why certain human rights issues are debated and how, as well as why and how certain issues, actors, and contexts are left without any attention. Not all issues that should be debated are. What this research aimed at was to create a wider understanding of the strategic aspects of the debate on human rights issues.

6.3 Evaluation, ethics and contributions to society

The aim of this research was to contribute to theory development concerning issue arenas and multi-actor debate and to increase the transparency of the human rights debate by enhancing understanding of how framing is used as a strategic tool to create issue salience in human rights issues.

The results show that framing is used in a multi-actor debate to increase issue and actor salience. The thesis concluded by presenting a theoretical model of the framing of human rights issues in issue arena debates. The theoretical model was based on multidisciplinary research. A multidisciplinary approach was chosen for several key reasons. First, while human rights issues are studied as a discreet discipline, they are involved also in various other fields. For example, to have restricted the research to following only a more customary legal point of view would have reduced the possibilities for a broader understanding of the debate on human rights and also therefore diminished the scope of this PhD thesis.

Second, since human rights issues are debated and framed in issue arenas, communication theory had to have a key role in the theoretical framework. More specifically, human rights issues are discussed by multiple actors, such as NGOs, various organizations and groups, and traditional decision makers, a fact which makes it necessary to integrate (inter)organizational communication as a key part of the multidisciplinary framework. Third, human rights issues are debated as political issues and decided upon by political actors. Therefore, political communication and political science formed a third key part of the multidisciplinary framework.

This PhD thesis connected four individual studies with their own research questions. These studies combined qualitative and quantitative research methods, qualitative and quantitative textual content analysis and interviews. The methods were chosen to create new insights into how various actors utilize framing to create issue salience when interacting in the debate, and how this contributes to power relations in the actor networks. Additionally, qualitative and quantitative research methods were chosen because the purpose was to create a profound theoretical understanding of the research topic. These methods were deemed suitable to use together since qualitative and quantitative methods often complement each other and offer validation for the respective findings of each method (Brians et al. 2011: 86).

When evaluating the methodological choices, the clarification by Lincoln and Guba (1985) about the trustworthiness of inquiries provided a suitable guideline. The authors (1985: 290) proposed four criteria in relation to the question "how can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an enquiry are worth paying attention to, working taking account of?" The criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 290). Following these criteria, the key aspects would be to show that 1) time has been invested in carefully implementing the

research, 2) to distinguish what is relevant to the research problem and apply triangulation, where different data collection methods are utilized, 3) to provide all the information possible regarding how and in what context the research is carried out, and 4) to allow the reader access to all the information needed to understand the findings of the research.

Throughout the research done in all of the individual studies, a lengthy timeframe for data gathering was utilized where possible in order to ensure that data that were usable and diverse were obtained. In particular in Studies III and IV this meant having 18-weeks and of two years worth of data that allow a broader outlook and consequently the ability to answer the research questions more profoundly.

The structuring of the research questions formed core for each individual study. If there were cases where data were gathered that could not be used directly to answer the research questions, these data were used as background information. This included some answers from the interviews with the NGOs during the Studies I and III.

This research has been carried out and reported in an open way to ensure accountability and to provide the reader access to the original research data if available and to explain all the choices in the methodology and in theory.

The methods utilised were chosen to fit the research questions. If any methods were not suitable for finding answers to each research question, they were not selected. Thus for example the number of interviews is not high in this research, given that the focus was on the theoretical aspects of power relations and framing in the human rights debate. Given that at the beginning of the PhD research it was important to establish an understanding of the connection between NGOs and agenda setting, interview results were made use of only in Study 1. The interviews were incorporated with textual analysis. During each of the individual Studies, it has been explained how all the data have been gathered. Qualitative and quantitative explanations are given as well as multiple examples with references to original data sources such as websites, social media, and NGOs' as well as the EP's official documents. Brians et al. (2011: 85) state that "This is necessary not only to capture the full complexity of the subject matter, but also to give the readers a way to judge the validity of the researcher's interpretation". In all of the individual studies of this PhD thesis, long quotations from the interviews and various written documents were offered as examples. This is to ensure validity and credibility since the reader has the possibility to view the original research materials from which the conclusions are drawn. References to previous literature cited are also clearly marked to ensure credit being given to the original authors. Additionally, the responsibilities of authors in each Study have been clearly marked in Section 3.1.

Ethics

Research should be able to stand the test of ethical questioning. When doing qualitative research, ethical questions are highly relevant and are connected to

evaluation criteria and to credibility (Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009). As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009: 127) mention qualitative research may not mean quality research. This research followed throughout the guidelines prepared by the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK) for "Good scientific practice and procedures for handling misconduct and fraud in science" (2002). According to TENK, The Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences are separated into three areas: 1) Respecting the autonomy of research subjects, 2) Avoiding harm, 3) Privacy and data protection.

Given that this research is greatly theory based, it was highly important to follow a structured and systematic style of marking the references in order to give credit to the original authors and thinkers, as is much suggested by (Brians, et al. 2011: 48). Additionally Brians et al. (2011: 24) mention that researchers have to consider how their own research may be used in practice by policy makers: "you should never assume that your own research cannot have consequences for real people's lives - for good or ill". This aspect is highly relevant when researching human rights and power relations. A researcher has to consider that though conducting the research in an objective and ethical manner, the results may be acted upon and even used in a non-ethical way. Therefore, a researcher must always be aware of the ramifications of the research when applied to real-world practices. Although this PhD research is largely based on a qualitative theoretical framework, the focus on human rights issues alone establishes the need for particular sensitivity. While the studies were used to further strengthen the theoretical research, the researcher did not do any fieldwork concerning human rights violations, since the focus of the research was on how human rights issues are discussed.

In terms of sensitivity, credibility, ethics and validity, the research was conducted as objectively as possible. The researcher does not have nor ever had any affiliation to any of the NGOs that served as research topics throughout this study. No funding was granted nor applied from any institution linked to NGOs or human rights groups. Additionally, objectivity in this research meant that whenever a specific human rights issue was investigated, such as child soldiers in the case of the Kony 2012-campaign, and the complex issue of human trafficking, with various other issues connected to them, these issues were researched based only on the data gained from the research methods.

The interview portions needed to be carried out in an ethical manner. The interviews in the Studies I and III were made either face-to-face or via the telephone with the consent of the participants who were all over 18-years old. The purpose of the research, how the data will be used and where the results will be published, were told to the interviewees beforehand. Interview structures were explained and the participants were told they were welcome to ask any additional questions, and they were given the right to withdraw from the interview at any time when they wished.

All the data gained from the interviews and the entire interview situations were confidential. From all interviews which the data gathered, the transcribed materials and any correspondence between the researcher and the interviewees

were made available only to the researcher and the interviewees. All interview data was restored and password protected by the researcher and will be destroyed once the research is completed.

Contributions to the society

This research contributes to the understanding of issue arena debates on human rights. Power relations, and poly-economic factors along with the limited and selective carrying capacities of both arenas and actors, create limitations for debate and decision making in issue arenas. Human rights can be seen often as separate issues, not an essential part of all social debate and decision making. Human rights can remain being paid only lip-service and the debate may not be transparent. The causal relations of various issues, events and actors involved in human rights may not be fully understood. Considering these realities, many human rights issues and serious violations are left without attention, and new issues may not be seen as rights issues. Consequently the debate and, in particular, the agenda setting phase lack transparency. For the sake of understanding the communication process of political decision making and public debate, it is vital to understand how certain issue selections, framing and power relations impact the debate and subsequent decision making. While power plays occur, the actual human rights issues and even violations may be left as a secondary matter. Researching these aspects can enhance the transparency of the debate on human rights.

This study focused on human rights debate. Human rights were chosen because the author was interested in human rights issues as an important factor in the development of future societies. This PhD thesis aimed to contribute to the promotion of transparency in the process of human rights debate. By illustrating how framing is used as a tool in enhancing salience and creating a context of causal relations, the PhD thesis clarifies how human rights issues are discussed in multi-actor issue arenas and, in particular, processes of issue selection and framing. By opening up the human rights debate, the selective nature of issue debates is explained. With more transparency, all actors will be better equipped to participate in the debate, which can benefit problem solving concerning human rights issues.

6.4 Research limitations

This PhD thesis is largely based on a qualitative theoretical framework and deals with human rights issues. The choice was made because the aim was to create a theoretical multidisciplinary model of issue arena debate on human rights. This was studied from a multidisciplinary perspective, bringing together insights from the literature on human rights, communication and political science.

The research methods were chosen to find answers to each individual research question in four studies. Naturally, the research on human rights issue arena debate had its limitations. The qualitative game situation of reacting by actors to other actors cannot be described in a lasting model. The model may be re-evaluated as our understanding of issues and theories evolves. The most central research limitations are, first, that research is largely based on a theoretical framework and, second, the data collection methods. The research methods were chosen in order to be able to find answers to each individual research question in the studies. A larger set of data both empirical and theoretical may have provided a wider perspective for the study. Additionally, the studies focused on particular human rights issues. This may have affected how framing was done and how power relations manifested in the networks. Alternative studies may have provided a different data set. The research used only small amount of interviews as an additional data gathering method. This choice was made so as to gain some background knowledge from the gatekeeper NGOs, while the emphasis was on thematic analysis of a large amount of textual materials that featured various actors. The research limitations can be addressed in future studies.

6.5 Future research suggestions

This PhD thesis contributed to the transparency of the human rights debate. It also stressed the importance of acknowledging that human rights debate is co-created by many different actors with different points of view, interests and consequently different communication strategies. The thesis opened up the black box of what goes on in issue arenas, and showed how the interplay of multiple actors defines the outcomes of the debate. Future research can delve deeper and further explain the interaction, using the model constructed. This could focus on human rights debate, but also on other social issues where similar co-creation processes occur.

The PhD thesis is largely based on a qualitative theoretical framework and deals with human rights issues. The insights gained are brought together in a theoretical model facilitating a wider understanding of how framing is used as a tool in the human rights debate. To further test the model, the next step could be to implement long-term case studies focusing on different human rights issues. For each of the phases in the model the interplay by the actors could be further investigated and the strategy choices made further clarified. For future research scrutinizing power relations in human rights networks and deepen the understanding of causal relations, the bandwagoning of issues, actors and frames could provide an interesting research field. The research should combine the perspectives of political science and humanities to further deepen the understanding of framing and power relations in debates and decision making processes.

In this PhD thesis literature was used to clarify interaction in the human rights issue arena from the perspective of networks, including the role of gatekeepers and communicative power, and by using agenda-setting and framing theory. Four studies were conducted.

Framing can be done in many different ways, as Hallahan (1999) clarified. In this PhD thesis his typology was adapted for social issues. Human rights issues are social issues for which in the literature all of the framing types were used, mostly the framing of attributes, emphasizing the economic or cultural context, and framing of situations, pointing out power differences between the actors.

In the human rights debate framing is used to support agenda setting and gain attention for human rights issues, as well as to put forward views on causal relations. The interplay in issue arenas is competitive and framing is also used to strengthen positions and gain communicative power to realise goals.

To gain attention for human rights issues NGOs use multi-channel communication strategies, making use of social media to post news that links to websites with full background information. The selection of issues also takes broader public support for their mission into account. Issues may be bandwagoned to other issues to emphasize causal relations. This use of framing highlights particular causal relations and relates to ways to solve an issue.

The EP mentions human rights issues within a bigger framework, addressing them within broader *economic* and social problems.

As human rights issues are rooted deep in society, finding solutions for violations requires engagement of many different actors. Solutions are sought via legislation, but issues need to gain salience and there needs to be enough consensus on causal relations to reach the political agenda. The latter relies on issue arena discussion.

This study concluded that not all issues that should be discussed are. There is indeed a selective and strategic process that is followed in the multi-actor debate on human rights. A better understanding of the process can create transparency in the debate, and facilitate sense-making and decision making concerning human rights issues. This would hopefully create a basis for more actors to get involved in the debate on human rights issues, and effectively address also those complex issues for which it is hard to find consensus in the societal debate.

FINNISH SUMMARY

Tämä väitöskirjatutkimus keskittyy kehystämisen strategiseen käyttämiseen asia-areenojen monitoimijakeskusteluissa ja miten strategista kehystämistä käytetään prosessissa, missä asioista tehdään tärkeitä. Tutkimustulokset lisäävät ymmärrystä siihen, miten toimijat hyödyntävät agendojen asettelu- ja kehystämisprosesseja ennen keskusteluja ja keskustelujen aikana asia-areenoilla. Lisäksi ymmärrys syvenee siitä, miten toimittajat hyödyntävät strategista kehystämistä ja agendojen asettelua muodostaessa ja ylläpitäessä valtasuhteita toimijoiden muodostamisessa verkostoissa.

Tulokset yhdistyvät käsitteellisessä mallissa, mikä kuvastaa kehystämisen prosesseja. Tämän väitöskirjan tulokset osoittavat, kuinka toimijat keskustele- vat ja tekevät viestintää koskevia päätöksiä asia-areenoilla. Nämä toimijat muodostavat verkostoja. Asia-areenat ja verkostot kietoutuvat yhteen limittäin. Toimijat voivat kuulua useisiin verkostoihin ja keskustella useilla asia-areenoilla, kuitenkin kaikki toimijat eivät kuulu samoihin verkostoihin tai ole vuorovaikutussuhteissa samoilla asia-areenoilla. Kilpailua voi esiintyä kausaa- lisuhteista sekä siitä, missä kontekstissa asioista keskustellaan ja kenen toimesta. Tämä vuorostaan luo valtasuhteita, tehden toisista toimijoista portinvartijoi- ta ja toisista vähemmän keskeisiä toimijoita vuorovaikutussuhteissa.

Ihmisoikeudet nähdään tärkeinä ja universaaleina. Kuitenkin tämä ei ole todellisuutta asia-areenoilla, mihin valikoivaisuus ja valtasuhteet vaikuttavat. Tämä tutkimus toteaa, että käyttämällä viestinnässä strategista kehystämistä, keskeiset toimijat voivat valikoiden työntää ihmisoikeuksia ja kehyksiä keskus- teluun. Lisäksi toimijat voivat luoda erilaisia kausaalisuhteita sekä asioiden että toimijoiden välille.

Tämä väitöskirja luo lisää läpinäkyvyyttä asia-areenojen ihmisoikeuskes- kusteluun, osoittamalla miten asioista voidaan tehdä tärkeitä valikoivasti ja luoda kausaalisuhteita käyttäen hyväksi strategista kehystämistä.

Avaamalla ihmisoikeuskeskusteluja niiden valikoivaa luonnetta voidaan selventää. Läpinäkyvyyden avulla kaikki toimijat ovat paremmin varusteltuja osallistumaan keskusteluihin, mikä voi edesauttaa ongelmien ratkaisua liittyen ihmisoikeuskysymyksiin.

Avainsanat: ihmisoikeudet, asia-areenat, valtasuhteet, kehystäminen

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Semi-structured question frame for Amnesty

Part	Focus	Set	Questions
1	NGO and PR / agenda setting	Basic	How important is PR and agenda setting for Amnesty and its goals?
			Which specific tools / tactics does Amnesty use for PR and agenda setting?
2	NGO's agenda setting and online communication	Online	<p>1. a) What role do online media have in Amnesty's PR / agenda setting?</p> <p>b) What purpose, if any, do online media specially have for Amnesty?</p> <p>c) What impact, if any, has online media had in Amnesty's PR / agenda setting?</p> <p>d) Has there been any change over time? - If so, when and how did the change occur?</p>
			<p>2. a) Does Amnesty re-frame PR / agenda setting for online media?</p> <p>b) Do online media impact the way Amnesty shares information, or reacts to global/domestic aff airs? - If so, what is the time-frame Amnesty reacts to current events online?</p>
			3. Does Amnesty use multiplatform tactics in PR / agenda setting?
			4. What role do traditional media have in Amnesty's PR / agenda setting?
			5. Does Amnesty have a connection with individual bloggers or other online content providers?
3	NGO and their environment	Society	1. a) How would you describe Amnesty's relations with the public?

			b) How, if any, has online media influenced and changed Amnesty's relations with the public?
			2. Does Amnesty actively seek to influence public affairs?
			3. Does Amnesty seek to have a permanent role on the decision-making tables globally and locally?
			4. According to Amnesty, is it more valuable to change the opinions of: a) public b) media c) decision-makers d) profitable / public organizations? - Please, clarify.
			5. Does Amnesty frame issues differently for decision-makers and the general public? If so, why? / why not?/ how?
			6. What are Amnesty's relations to other NGOs?

Appendix 2 Seven types of framing by Hallahan (1999)

Framing type	Description
Focus on situations	Allows examination of the interrelatedness of actors, their interests and relations, e.g. paying attention to who is top dog and who is an underdog
Focus on context attributes	Focuses on characteristics that are emphasized or ignored, linking the issue to a context or other topics
Focus on risky choices	Evaluation of situations where uncertainty is present, stressing the uncertainties and risks involved

Focus on actions	Evaluating the beneficial or problematic consequences of issues, making action appear necessary in achieving desired goals or avoiding negative consequences.
Focus on the kind of issue	Alternative ways of looking at the issue as a relevant social or economic problem, by emphasizing, e.g. political, legal, historical, cultural or economic aspects of the issue.
Focus on responsibilities	examines the responsibilities of actors and their role in the events of interest, e.g. attributing cause and blame
Focus on news	emphasizing the news as a source and newsworthy elements of events

Appendix 3 Semi-structured question frame for HRW

Part	Focus	Set	Questions
1	HRW and agenda setting/framing	Basic	<p>1. How important are agenda setting and framing in HRW's issue and campaign planning?</p> <p>2. In regards to framing, is there a need to emphasize particular issues and/or attributes to make them appear more salient in different issue arenas?</p> <p>- If so, can you please describe the process of formulating a frame for an issue?</p>
2	Issue adaption	Issues	<p>1. How does HRW adopt new issues to the agenda? What is the process behind it?</p> <p>2. What in particular does HRW stress when choosing to promote new issues?</p> <p>3. Does the process change when choosing to promote older issues that have not been promoted recently?</p> <p>4. To what extent does any of the following have an impact on HRW's issue selection?</p> <p>a) Other NGOs' agendas b) Real-world events c) Existing agendas</p>

			<p>5. Does HRW consider cost-effectiveness of each issue prior to adopting it? - If so, what is the process?</p> <p>6. What would HRW see is the time-frame that an issue can remain salient on issue arenas? - Do you try to influence this with re-framing?</p>
3	Human Rights Watch and societal role	Society	<p>1. How would you describe HRW's role in the society?</p> <p>2. In your opinion, where does HRW place the most emphasis on and why?</p> <p>a) On the ground research b) Promoting grass-root activism c) Assisting governments on policy formation? d) Something else</p> <p>3. Has there been any change over time in HRW's societal role and does it vary from campaign to campaign?</p> <p>4. Do you actively monitor different environments you operate on and if so, how?</p> <p>5. Does HRW aim to influence first a) the behaviour or b) beliefs and values of other actors?</p>
4	Power-relations	Power	<p>1. When you think about HRW's power in the society, do you consider framing and strategic issue selection to contribute to power, legitimacy and credibility?</p> <p>2. How would you describe HRW's power-relations to other major actors in the human rights issue arenas? Other actors can be states, other NGOs, multinationals and organizations and the public.</p> <p>3. HRW is seen as credible and legitimate gate-keeper with the power to push and pull issues from and to multiple issue arenas. In your opinion a) how was this achieved and b) how do you maintain it?</p> <p>4. Do you actively seek co-operation with</p>

			<p>smaller actors? - How do you select possible partners to cooperate with?</p>
5	Human rights	Human rights and HRW	<p>1. What is the most relevant task for HRW in the society?</p> <p>2. Currently, what do you consider to be the most salient human rights issues for HRW?</p> <p>3. How do HRW view human rights violations and violators should be tackled with?</p> <p>3. Looking back, has there been any change on how actors approach and possible solve human rights violations?</p> <p>4. What do you consider to be the future issues and challenges in the international human rights debate?</p>

ABBREVIATIONS

NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UDHR	the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
Amnesty	Amnesty International
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IC	The Invisible Children
Kony 2012	Kony 2012- campaign
The EP	The European Parliament
Eduskunta	The Finnish Parliament

ORIGINAL PAPERS

I

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND ONLINE AGENDA SETTING

by

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Human rights organizations and online agenda setting

NiinaMeriläinen and Marita Vos

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to better understand agenda setting by international human rights organizations in the online environment and at the same time contribute to agenda-setting theory. The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the area of human rights is clarified, and agenda-setting and related concepts are discussed.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The study focuses on how attention is drawn to human rights issues in online communication by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International. A content analysis of online forums of HRW and Amnesty International was conducted by monitoring their web sites and Facebook and Twitter pages over a period of 3 months. In addition, two expert interviews with representatives of Amnesty Finland were conducted to better understand how the organization's online communication activities relate to its policies in drawing attention to human rights.

Findings – Based on this study, drawing attention to human rights issues is a goal that leads to active online communication. NGOs aim at attracting attention to their issues online by initiating a dialogue via online forums and motivating the public to participate in activities that may influence the media and the political agenda. The existing agenda-setting research tends to emphasize the role of journalists in setting the public agenda, and mentions NGOs primarily as a source for journalists and as a political player. The online environment shows, however, that these NGOs mostly aim at setting the public agenda to create social change, while the media and political agenda are also not forgotten.

Research limitations/implications – This study suggests that the interdependence of the media, public and political agendas is more complex than has thus far been considered in agenda-setting theory, especially in the current online environment. It investigates online agenda-setting by two international NGOs, but does not discuss the role of the media or the public at large in their relationship with these NGOs. As this study has a limited time-frame, a content analysis over a longer period and interviews with representatives of a wider variety of NGOs could be a next step. Future research could also compare the online communication of NGOs with that of profit organisations.

Practical implications – The findings show how agenda setting is supported by intricate multi-platform activities in the present-day online environment by the organizations studied in order to initiate a dialogue on societal issues. This suggests that in the online environment, the media, public and political agendas are becoming increasingly interrelated and within this triangle the public agenda seems to be gaining further in importance.

Originality/value – The impact that NGOs have on today's society is growing, and hence studying their online agenda setting is valuable from the perspective of corporate communication. International NGOs early on recognised the value of online communication.

Keywords – Non-governmental organizations, Corporate Communications, Social Networking sites, Social media, Internet, Agenda setting, Human rights

1. Introduction

Globalization has changed the environment in which international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) function. The changing environment calls for new agenda-setting tactics and online communication strategies. Currently, many NGOs are searching for ways to reach large public groups, companies and governments globally. In order to do so, NGOs must distinguish themselves from competing organizations.

An essential aim for NGOs is to get their messages onto the media, public and political agendas. In this way issues can become salient in the arena of public debate. Moreover, NGOs can initiate social change by using online communication and inviting the public to participate in debate on an issue. Through issue salience and public debate, NGOs can attract more people and invite them to participate in grass-root level activities, including activism. Thus, the role of NGOs in the public arena can grow, as can their impact on political agendas. Also, NGOs can influence decision-makers directly, thereby becoming part of the legislative process regarding issues of relevance to them.

Earlier, agenda-setting theory showed how the media agenda may influence the public agenda (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989), while more recently researchers have pointed to the interdependence that subsists between the media, public and political agendas (Young and McCarthy, 2009). Thus far, the role of companies has mainly been mentioned as a source for journalists, while interest groups have been mentioned in relation to the political agenda. The emphasis has been on understanding the role of the press in setting the public agenda, which in turn could influence the political agenda. However, nowadays the prevalence of online communication channels creates opportunities for organizations to interact directly with publics. This study examines the phenomenon of agenda setting in the online environment from the perspective of NGOs.

The study combines a literature study with some empirical research, a content analysis of online platforms and expert interviews. Its purpose is to enhance understanding of agenda setting in the online environment by international human rights organizations. The study focuses on two NGOs, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW), and how they draw attention to human rights issues. These NGOs were selected for the reason that they are the biggest and most well-known international human rights organizations.

1.1 The role of NGOs

Non-governmental organisations, NGOs, are “private, non-profit, professional organizations, with a distinctive legal character, concerned with public welfare goals” (Clarke, 1998: 36). Commonly, NGOs not only focus on welfare but also on a wider array of societal issues, including e.g. nature protection and animal rights. The field of NGOs and their operations is hard to classify, since these organizations are very diverse (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002). According to Bob (2002), many researchers see NGOs as moral entrepreneurs rather than organisations. The role of NGOs as a countervailing power is created by mobilizing public support and bringing sensitive issues

to public and political notice. They often make the impossible possible, by doing what governments cannot or will not do (Simmons, 1998).

It is clear that many societal problems cannot be solved by governments or profit organizations alone (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2002). Nowadays NGOs are included in the decision-making process. They urge governments and profit organisations to respect human rights and include local development programs in their organizational operations (Evuleocha, 2005; Dhir, 2007). Financial freedom is undoubtedly a resource for NGOs, as also are legitimacy, information and knowledge (Yanacopulos, 2005).

NGOs may feel that societal change cannot be initiated at government level but only from the bottom up. The more people NGOs can attract in support of their operations, the more power they may have in the eyes of decision-makers. It is the public that can create change processes (Goss, 2001), and therefore NGOs encourage public participation at the grass-roots level, including the public in their operations, e.g. by writing letters, framing petitions, and organizing demonstrations and user boycotts (Scholte, 1999).

NGOs function differently from profit organisations, since they seek political impact instead of profits (Blood, 2004). Despite their differences, profit organizations and NGOs also share similarities. NGOs and profit organizations both seek to generate attention to topics related to their goals. The fact that NGOs market products, i.e. campaigns and ideologies (Blood, 2004), forces them to distinguish themselves from other NGOs, their competitors. There are signs that this competition has weakened the support for and effectiveness of many NGOs (Ohanyan, 2009).

Undoubtedly, NGOs have power in the global arena, if not politically, then as pressure groups. As a result, some observers fear they may evolve from watchdogs and grass-root movements into power holders. Moreover, NGOs may not be governed democratically. But although they may also suffer from elitism and bureaucracy, in recent years NGOs have provided solutions to problems without being perceived as interfering (Hoffman, 2004). NGOs initiate discussion about societal issues, thus enhancing dialogue between the public and decision-makers. Human rights organizations aim at social change by drawing attention to human rights violations.

The General Assembly of the United Nations presented the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 10, 1948, just two years after the end of the Second World War. The declaration has been adopted by almost all of the member countries. However, it is not legally binding and human rights violations are common and occur in every part of the world. Indeed there is little will to protect basic human rights in many countries (Spini and Doise, 1998). Although dictators and hostile governments may ignore human rights, they also seek to maintain a positive image in the global arena and cannot fully silence human rights NGOs (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). Human rights organizations try to generate attention to human rights and initiate discussion on sensitive issues such as human trafficking. This paper is focused on agenda setting and how this is addressed in online communication by human rights NGOs.

1.2 Agenda setting

To understand how human rights organizations draw attention to human rights issues, the agenda-setting theory is utilized. The theory of agenda setting, which was proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) on the basis of earlier work by, e.g., Lippmann (1922), postulates that a clear connection exists between news media coverage and public opinion. The basic

assumption of the agenda-setting theory is that the news media in particular, more than the media in general, have an influence on public opinion (Sheafer and Weimann, 2005).

This does not mean that the press is successful in swaying their audience to adopt a certain point of view, but rather that there is a high level of correspondence between the amount of coverage given to issues and the level of importance assigned to these issues by people who have been exposed to media reports (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). An agenda is a list of issues discussed and ranked according to their importance. In agenda setting, the salience of issues or objects viewed in the news media is transferred to the public as knowledge (McCombs and Reynolds, 2002). Agenda-setting theory explains how issues reported in the media can become important among the public. In other words: what the media report, people at large may see as more important. When reporting issues, the media add emphasis to some of these (Sheafer, 2007). The coverage of issues by the media has an effect, but the level of salience that an issues gains varies from one issue to another (Dunaway, Branton and Abrajano, 2010; Walgrave, Soroka, Nuytemans, 2008).

To understand agenda setting, priming and framing are important concepts. In priming, the media repeat and emphasize the importance of issues and, this way, particular issues appear more relevant in the eyes of the public (Weaver, 2007). Framing stresses certain aspects of issues over others, and thus it is a selective process (Lecheler and De Vreese, 2010). It occurs when the particular way in which issues are characterized in the media has an influence on how they are understood by the audience (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). Through priming and framing, the mass media shape the audience's views on issues (Entman, 2007).

Through the media agenda, journalists can influence which issues are high not only on the public but also on the political agenda. The media, public and political agendas are interrelated. Weaver (1990) suggests that the media agenda is, in fact, formed together by politicians, their advisors and journalists. In this way, the agendas of the public, the media and the decision-makers are unified (Young and McCarthy, 2009). However, the time lag for inter-agenda influence remains debatable, as there is no conclusive evidence showing how long it takes for an issue to become salient in another agenda (Stroud and Kenski, 2007; Winter and Eyal, 1981). Consequently, the media are not the only agenda setters: "the public and the news media are joint participants in the agenda-setting process" (McCombs, 1997: 437).

Uscinski (2009) argues that the classical agenda-setting theory leads to overestimation of the power of the media to influence public opinion, and proposes the concept of an audience-driven framework, where the public influences the media. In audience-driven agenda setting, issues discussed by the public lead the media to adjust their agenda. Much research on agenda setting indeed focuses on the role of the news media, and although journalists create the agenda of the news media, the reality is more complex as many actors are involved in agenda setting. Journalists are approached by various sources attempting to get their issues on the media agenda (Moreno and Kiouisis, 2009). Where the agenda-setting literature mentions the role of organizations, it is mainly as sources for journalists or in relation to the political agenda. As agenda setting is an important goal of NGOs, especially for human rights organizations that need to generate attention to human rights violations, investigating their agenda setting may bring a fresh perspective to the debate. This is even more the case in the online environment. The prevalence of online communication may change the current agenda hierarchy and thus the inter-relations between the media, public and political agendas.

1.3 Online communication and agenda setting

Online communication has challenged traditional media outlets as the universal agenda-setting outlet (Meraz, 2009). It has become the new mass medium (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002). According to Wallsten (2007), the public, through blogs and other social media, can shape the media agenda, but this is not self-evident and tends to be issue-related. Online communication has benefited international NGOs since it is a useful tool for mobilizing people across borders, allowing discussion among several participants (Kiely, 2005). NGOs also organize events, using online communication, to get their issues on the media agenda. With newsworthy events, they find themselves competing for space in the media (Oliver and Maney, 2000). The competition for a slot in the news is fierce, which is why NGOs could benefit from alternative independent 'news outlets' on the Internet.

There are also other reasons for favouring online communication. The Internet offers greater visibility and an opportunity to make direct connections (Fortunati, Sarrica, O'Sullivan, Balcytiene, Harro-Loit, Macgregor, Roussou, Salaverría, deLuca, 2009). If the media or politicians are unaware of or reluctant to discuss human rights violations, then individual people and NGOs have the possibility to speak about these issues online. Online communication offers individuals, groups, journalists, politicians and organizations a lively platform, e.g. to express opinions and connect with like-minded people. Internet users can discuss issues and subsequently influence agenda setting (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002).

Naturally, the online media do not, in any way, have absolute power or autonomy. Selective exposure (Hutchings, 2001; Mendelsohn, 1973) also exists in online communication. If bloggers are not discussing issues deemed important, they may be excluded from the media and political debate (Wallsten, 2007). Similarly, issues that do not attract much interest in online discussions may not be seen as pressing or worthy of the public's interest, and as a consequence are not transferred to the media agenda by journalists (Uscinski, 2009).

Human rights organizations attempt to have their issues perceived as salient and worthy of attention. Media and initiative campaigns can be used to increase public awareness and understanding of issues (Tolbert, McNeal and Smith, 2003). In this paper online communication is investigated to find out how human rights organizations draw attention to their key issues using internet platforms.

2. Methodology

This study aims at understanding agenda setting by international human rights organizations in the online environment. The research problem is how human rights organizations draw attention to human rights issues on the Internet. This is addressed by two research questions.

RQ1: What online communication activities are used by human rights organizations to initiate interaction on human rights issues? RQ2: How are the online communication activities of human rights organizations linked with organizational agenda-setting policies?

The study focused on online communication by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, since they are the two most well-known and biggest international human rights NGOs, both have a long history, and both combine their own research with action-taking. HRW was established in 1978, after the creation of Helsinki Watch, to support citizen groups by monitoring governments in the Soviet sphere of influence as well as to shed light on human rights violations. In 1988, after the creation of multiple area Watches, they formally adopted the

name Human Rights Watch. The headquarters of Human Rights Watch is located in New York, USA.

The foundation of Amnesty International (Amnesty) in 1961 was initiated by the article 'The Forgotten Prisoners' by the British lawyer Peter Benenson in the Observer. The article addressed the imprisonment of two Portuguese students, who were imprisoned for raising their wine glasses in a toast to freedom. After the article had also been published in many other newspapers, thousands of people all around the world offered to help. Amnesty's general secretariat is located in London, the United Kingdom.

To answer the first research question a content analysis of the online communication platforms of HRW and Amnesty International was conducted. The aim was to see how both organizations utilize online means of communication. By checking the organizational web pages it became clear that both organizations actively used Facebook and Twitter, and thus these platforms were also included in the investigation. Over a period of 3 months the organizations' web sites and their Facebook and Twitter pages were monitored (RQ1).

To answer the second research question, two expert-interviews with representatives of Amnesty Finland were conducted to better understand how the organization's online communication activities further the organization's goal of drawing attention to human rights issues and in this way support its agenda setting (RQ2). Although it was not possible to obtain cooperation for an interview with HRW, the organizations were deemed similar enough to provide insight into the purpose of their online activities and how their agenda setting is supported by online communication. However, to improve the reliability of the results, the similarities and differences between the two organizations were addressed in the interviews with representatives of Amnesty.

2.1 Content analysis

To investigate the online communication by HWR and Amnesty a content analysis of their respective Internet sites and Facebook and Twitter pages was conducted (for the web addresses see tables 1 and 2). The aim was to monitor how both organizations utilize online communication in a qualitative analysis. The researchers collected the data over a three-month period, from mid-February to mid-May 2010. The Internet sites, Facebook and Twitter pages were visited twice a week, on Monday and Friday. On the Internet sites the news and report sections and the links that were included in those sections were observed. On Facebook and Twitter, the posts and tweets, including links, were analysed. The researchers' role in relation to the research topic was silent and non-participatory.

The findings were coded according to groups of variables for further analysis, focusing on: (1) the kind of content found; (2) style of language; (3) how the web platforms were linked; and (4) whether discussion was generated among users. The content of the three online platforms was monitored simultaneously to see if there were similarities in messages and connections between the online forums. During the three-month observation period a weekly summary of the content was displayed in a table format using Excel spread sheet software, one file for each organization. The Internet site, Facebook and Twitter were in rows while the above-mentioned groups of variables formed the columns of the Excel file. The observations were made to describe the online communication activities of HRW and Amnesty International, and see how the web platforms initiated interaction on human rights issues.

2.2 Expert interviews

To understand how online communication activities serve the organizational aim of drawing further attention to human rights issues, two expert interviews with representatives of Amnesty Finland were conducted. It was not possible to obtain cooperation for an interview with HRW; however, the similarities and differences between the organizations were addressed in the Amnesty interviews. The first interview was with an expert in online communication from Amnesty Finland and focused on how the organization utilizes online communication, while the second interview was with the executive director of Amnesty Finland and focused on how the organization's online activities contribute to its policies in drawing attention to human rights issues.

Both of the semi-structured interviews lasted one hour and were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The first interview addressed: (1) the NGO and its communication goals, (2) the NGO's agenda setting and online communication. The questions for the second interview addressed: (1) the NGO and agenda setting, (2) its goals, target audiences, and role in society. During the interviews, additional questions were asked, turning the interviews into a free-flowing discussion. One of the researchers served as interviewer. After the interviews, the collected data were transcribed and qualitatively analyzed by the researchers, focusing on online communication strategies and their relation to achieving the goal of drawing attention to human rights issues. For the purpose of the study the answers were translated.

3. Results

The mixed method study threw light on how these human rights NGOs used communication and agenda setting on the Internet to further their policies.

3.1 Content analysis

During the observation period, the international online forums of both international human rights organizations showed considerable activity. The findings for the Internet page, Facebook and Twitter will be explained below, first for HRW and then for Amnesty International.

3.1.1 Online communication by HRW

Table 1 shows an overview of the international online forums of HRW, based on the analysis of the Internet content during the three-month monitoring period.

Table 1 Overview of the investigated international online platforms of Human Rights Watch

Main web site:	www.hrw.org (287 posts)
<i>(1) Content</i>	Formal, lengthy documents, annual and topical reports as PDF files, interviews, videos, and links
<i>(2) Style</i>	Official reporting style, offering information and news stories depending on their content; also available e.g. in Dutch, French, Arabic, Russian, and Spanish
<i>(3) Links</i>	Present in various news items; often to previous stories or news items on HRW's web sites, videos, interviews, letters, and sometimes to outside web sites

(4) <i>Discussion</i>	No discussion, but information provided on 16 groups of topics including multiple issues; also available by region; one section on taking action; almost all the topics were updated once or twice a week
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/HumanRightsWatch (148 posts)
(1) <i>Content</i>	International Slogan: “Tyranny has a witness”; short news items, with links to external sites
(2) <i>Style</i>	Official and brief
(3) <i>Links</i>	Links are available to multiple external sites, mainly to hrw.org, on each post
(4) <i>Discussion</i>	Many posts generated discussion among Facebook users; many posts received between 1- 103 comments and likes between 19 and 119
Twitter:	http://twitter.com/hrw (349 tweets)
(1) <i>Content</i>	Short items of news and information, only 140 signs allowed
(2) <i>Style</i>	Brief and detailed
(3) <i>Links</i>	Every tweet has links, most often to hrw.org
(4) <i>Discussion</i>	No notable discussion, tweets linked to other twitter accounts

HRW’s web site

On its web site, HRW represents itself as a researcher, informant and official human rights expert. It provides research reports based on investigations of human rights issues and violations, in this way sharing information with the wider public and promoting awareness rather than direct participation. HRW’s Facebook and Twitter provide people with information in an informal environment, and invite them to visit the main web site www.hrw.org for more detailed and ‘official’ information. During the period 287 news postings were made. As mentioned before, they were analysed according to the kind of content found, the style of the language, how the web platforms were linked and whether discussion was generated among users.

All the materials, including texts, photos, videos and reports, provided information in a neutral, matter-of-fact way. The *content* provided was based on research conducted by HRW’s researchers in the field. The pictures and video clips had some dramatic content, but with a clear intent to inform. These photos and videos included information on human rights violations, as well as on the life of refugees and persecuted people.

In *style*, what emerged clearly from scrutiny of the HRW web site www.hrw.org was the formal quality of the language used. The texts on research and the policy side of human rights work were presented with an official sounding tone, although the analysed section was titled news and reports. Often, versions in other languages were available.

Many of the news items and reports had *links*, such as videos or reports made by HRW for e.g. the United Nations.

The web site showed no *discussion* but detailed information on 16 groups of topics. The topics varied from arms to women’s rights. Also, issues were available by region. There was one section on the web site where the users could read about eight special cases, sign pre-written petitions or find out whom to contact in order to take action. The most updated posts were: Children’s rights, ESC (economic, social and cultural rights), Counterterrorism, Torture and Women’s rights.

HRW’s Facebook and Twitter

HRW takes a strong stand on the top of its Facebook page with the slogan “Tyranny has a witness”. By this means HRW is cast in the role of that witness, as an authority on human rights issues exposing human rights violators.

The *content* of the pages consisted of brief news items that linked to external pages for background information. During the observation period 148 posts and 349 tweets were made.

In *style*, the Facebook and Twitter posts were short and compact, indicating that the messages were urgent and inviting people to learn more.

All news items contained *links* to external sites, such as HRW’s main web site, YouTube videos, and events supported or recommended by HRW. Users were directed from one site to another, ultimately visiting Facebook, Twitter and the main Internet site.

The Facebook pages included *discussion* of many campaigns; while some news items were accompanied by brief comments, discussion mostly was initiated by the users themselves, not HRW. Some news items generated active comments, varying from just one comment to 103 comments. In their comments, the public often openly and passionately shared opinions and provided many external links. On Twitter, discussion was not notably present.

It can be concluded that HRW makes active use of online communication, creating interaction with members of the public. All of the online tools were used by HRW once a day, or more, and it was only on rare occasions that tweets, Facebook posts or news bulletins were absent. The main web site stresses research results and detailed formal information, while on Facebook and Twitter short messages invite users to find out more. When a new report was posted on www.hrw.org, it was soon mentioned in a tweet and/or Facebook post. In this way, all the online forums were combined to form a single multi-platform online tool.

3.1.2 Online communication by Amnesty International

Table 1 shows an overview of the international online forums of Amnesty International, based on the analysis of the Internet content during the three-month monitoring period.

Table 2 Overview of the investigated international online platforms of Amnesty International (USA)

Main web site:	www.amnesty.org (163 posts)
(1) <i>Content</i>	Formal, lengthy documents, special and topical reports as PDF files, links included in some news, special sections for videos and good news
(2) <i>Style</i>	Official reporting style, offering information and news stories depending on their content; also available e.g. in Dutch, French, Arabic, Russian, and Spanish
(3) <i>Links</i>	Present in various news items; often to previous stories or news items on Amnesty’s web sites, videos, interviews, letters, and sometimes to outside web sites
(4) <i>Discussion</i>	No discussion, but information provided on 27 groups of topics including multiple issues; also available by region; sections on joining in, donating and taking action; almost all the topics were updated once or twice a week.
Facebook:	www.facebook.com/pages/.../Amnesty.../111658128847068 (126 posts)
(1) <i>Content</i>	Amnesty US Slogan: “Fighting the bad guys since 1961”; short news items, with links to external sites
(2) <i>Style</i>	Official and brief
(3) <i>Links</i>	Links are available to multiple external sites, mainly to amnesty.org , on each post

(4) <i>Discussion</i>	Many posts generated discussion among Facebook users; many posts received between 1 to over 100 replies and likes between 3-251.
Twitter:	http://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline (270 tweets)
(1) <i>Content</i>	Short items of news and information, only 140 signs allowed, 260 tweets
(2) <i>Style</i>	Brief and detailed
(3) <i>Links</i>	Every tweet has a link, often to www.amnesty.org
(4) <i>Discussion</i>	No notable discussion, tweets linked to other twitter accounts

Amnesty’s web site

The web site of Amnesty International shows many similarities with the web site of HRW. Amnesty has three aims: to research human rights violations, report about these violations and generate activism. On Amnesty’s web site these three roles have their own sections. On the web site Amnesty share their research results in detailed news stories and special reports. Amnesty’s Facebook and Twitter offer quick news bulletins and urge people to participate in events and sign petitions, while inviting people to visit the web site www.amnesty.org for more ‘official’ information. During the period 163 news postings were made.

All the materials, such as texts, special reports, photos and videos, provided information in a neutral, matter-of-fact way. The *content* was based on research conducted by Amnesty’s researchers and eye witnesses in the field in various countries. The photos and video clips had some dramatic content but with the intent to inform on human rights violations. The sections ‘Donate’ and ‘Join’ sought to persuade people to fund Amnesty’s operations and join Amnesty’s activism.

In *style*, the information posted on Amnesty’s web site www.amnesty.org was rather formal. Although Amnesty promotes activism, the texts based on its own research have an overall formal quality to position the organization as an authority on human rights issues. Often, information was available in various language versions.

Many of the news items and reports had *links*, to videos or reports made by Amnesty or e.g. the United Nations.

The web site contained no *discussion*, but detailed information was given on 27 groups of topics. The topics varied from the arms trade to violence against women. Also, news was available by region. There was section on the web site where the users could learn about how to take part in activism, sign pre-written petitions or donate money to Amnesty. The issues most addressed were: economic, cultural and social rights, women’s rights and the rise of civil society in Africa and the Middle East.

Amnesty’s Facebook and Twitter

There are many similarities between Amnesty (USA) and HRW (USA) in the use of Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook, for example, Amnesty positions itself strongly with the slogan “Fighting the bad guys since 1961”. By doing so, Amnesty is positioning itself in the role of an activist who is on the side of good. During the observation period Amnesty made 126 posts.

The *content* of the pages consisted of brief news that linked to external pages for background and detailed information. There were 126 Facebook and 260 tweets made during the observation period.

In *style*, both the Facebook and Twitter posts were short, suggesting that the messages were urgent and inviting people to learn more about the issues in question.

All news items contained *links* to external sites, such as Amnesty’s main web site, YouTube videos, e-petitions and events organised or recommended by Amnesty. Users were directed from one site to another, ultimately visiting Facebook, Twitter and the main Internet site.

The Facebook pages included *discussion* on many campaigns and contained invitations to events; while some news posts were accompanied by brief comments, discussion was mostly initiated by the users themselves, not Amnesty. Amnesty sometimes replied to comments. Some news generated active comments, varying from one to 119 comments. In their comments, the public shared heated and opinionated comments with some external links. On Twitter, discussion was not visible, just a few re-tweets.

It can be concluded that Amnesty uses online communication by creating multiplatform space online to promote human rights issues. Amnesty seeks to create activism while it disseminates its research results online. It updates its online tools almost daily; only on rare occasions were tweets, Facebook posts or news bulletins absent. The main web site stresses research and activism, and how individuals can have an impact on human rights performance, while donations can also play a part in activism. Amnesty’s short messages in Facebook and Twitter invite users to find out more.

In sum, both human rights organizations combined all the online forums to construct an integrated multi-platform online tool. When, for example, a new report was posted on www.hrw.org or on www.amnesty.org, it was soon mentioned in a tweet and Facebook post. The emphasis on content was slightly different; Amnesty also promoted activism next to research in its online forums, whereas HRW focused primarily on research.

3.2 Interview results

In the expert interviews, the relation of the online communication strategies used to the overall policy goal of generating attention to human rights issues was investigated. First, the use by Amnesty of online media is examined and, second, the role of online communication in drawing attention to human rights issues.

3.2.1 Online media

According to the interviewees Amnesty carefully plans its campaigns and means of communication to achieve pre-set goals and achieve the best possible effect. Amnesty Finland follows the same online communication strategy as Amnesty International. The organization feels that online forums can add to the traditional media, as journalists are not always willing to address issues that Amnesty sees as important. It realises, though, that getting its messages through is relatively easy as, according to the interviewee, the organization is one of the most trustworthy brands offering independent and reliable information on human rights.

The online media have had a lasting effect on how Amnesty shares information. The organization intensively uses online communication. Table 2 lists the aim and purpose of Amnesty’s online communication channels and is based on information received from the interviewees. This clarifies how the different platforms, including both local and international web platforms, are intended to mesh.

Table 3. Overview of Amnesty’s online platforms

Name	Aim and purpose
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Main web site www.amnesty.org International	Information channel All annual and campaign related reports and statements can be found here. It serves as a library and database of information on campaigns, and also gives details on how to donate money.
Local web site www.amnesty.fi Finnish, similar web sites in other countries	Information and activism channel Information on campaigns and how to join campaigns. Encourages civil activism and is also a channel for financial contributions.
Main Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/.../Amnesty.../111658128847068 International	Information and activism channel Information on campaigns and brief news items. Encourages action- taking and participation, such as signing petitions and visiting the main forum (amnesty.org) for more information.
Local Facebook page www.facebook.com/pages/.../Amnesty.../134934386349 Finnish	Information and activism channel, Used for quick sharing of information, when something needs to be addressed regarding a human rights situation. It has three main purposes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Information on up-to-date news and events, (2) Event notifications and invitations , and (3) Quick action-taking requests. It encourages action-taking and participation: signing petitions and visiting the main forum (amnesty.fi) for more information.
Main Twitter page http://twitter.com/AmnestyOnline International	Quick information and notification channel Short news items and interesting issues. Direct links to a new site, often to other twitter pages or additional Amnesty forums, e.g. Amnesty.org and Amnesty.org.uk.
Local Twitter http://twitter.com/amnestyfinland Finnish, similar web sites in other countries	Quick information and notification channel Channel for quick reactions. Used to share links and persuade people to visit Amnesty.fi to find more information and sign petitions.

According to the interviewees Amnesty uses multiplatform tactics online. The main sites, both international and Finnish, are used as databases. There, information on all Amnesty’s campaigns can be found, annual and special reports downloaded, and financial donations made. While the main sites are used for information libraries and databases, the Facebook and Twitter pages are used for quick reactions on topical issues.

“We use Facebook in three ways: to inform people about large scale topical issues, to inform about current events/demonstrations, and to ask for quick participation when something is wrong. Facebook is a very useful gadget for quick requests. Of course we also get an idea of what people think about us though Facebook.”

“There are no international limitations or guidelines as to how to use the social media. We can basically do how we see fit. Then, of course, we have unofficial fan sites on Facebook, where we as an organization have no say in the content. But they are quite funny.”

However, Facebook and Twitter are not used as a tool for two-way communication but mainly for one-way information.

“Of course, they are being monitored and (we) react to questions and answer them. To some extent, I try to tempt people to participate, but this is mostly done on Twitter. We use twitter to persuade people to visit our Amnesty.fi web site.”

According to the interviewees, Amnesty has three main functions, in which online communication has an essential role: (1) to research human rights; (2) to report human rights violations; and (3) to generate activism on the grass-roots level. Although Amnesty has a stronger emphasis on activism than HRW, there are also many similarities and the multi-platform approach online is used by both organizations.

3.2.2 Amnesty and agenda setting

Regarding its strategies, Amnesty follows the guidelines issued by its Secretariat in London. The objective is to ensure alignment in how the organization approaches its self-appointed task of improving human rights worldwide and initiating change in this way. However, the Amnesty organizations set up in different countries also have own strategies, approved in their annual meetings, on important issues.

“Our methods are selected according to the issue. These issues are very diverse, e.g. if we are addressing the issue of a Chinese political prisoner, we may see it as important to implement direct action, since communication with the Chinese authorities will often simply not work. Then we ask people to sign a petition, which has proven effective, and then send these letters to the prison.”

The interviewed executive director stated that the NGO’s power comes from combining Amnesty’s weight or legitimacy, and its civil activism. This way a change process can be initiated, or at least, decision-makers can, it is hoped, be reached. Activism, or grass-roots support, is valued by Amnesty. Given that human rights violations are big issues and widely condemned, Amnesty feels that the issues frame themselves and do not need PR to influence perception.

“We don’t have to frame or shape our core messages. We don’t have to sell them or be ‘juicy’ either. Human rights violations are such an important message. They are sent as they are. We don’t want to shock people. That would change our role and would not be smart. We simply tell people ‘here we have human rights violations; you can have an influence by writing a letter or coming to our event’. That is how we create contact with the people who take part into our operations.”

Thus, Amnesty sees that all it needs is to get human rights higher on the agenda through getting people interested in these issues or willing to participate in Amnesty’s campaigns. Online communication is an important means, next to media relations, to achieving this objective. The NGO stresses that when people become aware of issues, societal change can occur, e.g. when people become active and sign petitions or send letters as a way of exerting pressure to end human rights violations. Most of Amnesty’s messages are aimed at the general public, but the strategies chosen differ. For example, the Violence against Women (‘Joku Raja’) campaign, carried out in Finland, was aimed at raising awareness and changing the law in Finland regarding violence against women. As the issue is culturally engaging, and has not been widely discussed in the public arena, it required different methods.

“Then we aim to achieve a dialogue, because it is the only way to get through. In situations like this, we can’t use petitions or send letters to a man who has assaulted his wife. The situation requires different means to intervene. So, in this campaign there were elements of PR and information sending, seeking donations, and activism as well as lobbying. Also, we had an expert working solely with this campaign, doing influencing and research. This is how we think: if people become aware of human rights violations, some kind of change can occur.”

The protection of human rights is a principle that many states have agreed to, but to put it into practice entails that attention be drawn to ongoing human rights violations. The interviewees stated that Amnesty has been very successful in bringing new issues onto the public, media and political agendas. Amnesty thus proclaims itself a permanent member of policy formation coalitions.

“Disappearance (of people)... Amnesty was perhaps the organization that brought this issue onto the public agenda. The International arms trade treaty, no one was talking about it, or even interested. Amnesty started the advocacy work in 2001, arguing that this kind of treaty is needed. In 2003-04 the advocacy work expanded into a larger (public) campaign. In 2005 the UN started a process where the development work for this treaty began and eventually the member states would ratify the treaty. Hence, it was us who brought the issue onto the public agenda.”

“Our aim is to bring new issues onto agendas. It is equally important to us to react to existing issues.”

Amnesty sees itself as provider of trustworthy information, as well as an initiator of volunteer-based activism. With its knowledge and with the public’s participation, it informs decision-makers and seeks political change. Amnesty and HRW both are clearly aware that they need to involve a wider audience to put human rights issues high on the agenda. This explains why they prioritize online communication and pay much attention to it, using multiplatform strategies that carefully inter-relate the information on their main web sites and in social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

4. Conclusion and discussion

Human rights NGOs are regarded as experts on human rights issues. The UN resolution on human rights is valued, but it is not a legally binding document and human rights violations occur in all parts of the world. The two NGOs studied here seek to increase the salience of human rights issues and utilize the opportunities for agenda setting offered by the social media as an essential part of their operations. Both Amnesty and HRW carefully choose online communication strategies for maximum effect in order to initiate public debate. Both discuss their main issues in several online forums.

NGOs mainly derive power from public participation (Scholte, 1999). They need to encourage the public to take part in their campaigns and sign their petitions, to enhance their value in the eyes of decision-makers. Thus, both human rights organizations have gone where the public is: online. The online forums are heavily used by both NGOs. They publish information online and function as content providers without journalistic gate-keeping. Both Amnesty and HRW utilize multiplatform strategies and may be more active

online than many governments and business organizations. The main Internet sites serve as databases, providing all the NGO's official information. In addition, Facebook pages and Twitter are used to attract attention and invite people to visit the main site, and to take part in the public debate and activism.

The information on Facebook and Twitter is presented in short messages, strengthening the relevance of the issues, while triggering the curiosity of people to learn more. According to the Amnesty interviewees, social media are used encouraging people to learn more about human rights issues, generating activism and promoting demonstrations or events. The content analysis of the online tools used by HRW suggests that HRW has similar starting points for its communication, although online it focuses more on its role as an expert authority on the topic and less on generating activism.

Agenda setting may be seen as a precondition to be heard in society nowadays. The findings of this study demonstrate that human rights organizations promote information and grass-roots participation, as well as their value as research organizations. An emphasis on grass-roots participation and research characterizes Amnesty, while HRW's online profile rather seems designed to fit their expert role in putting pressure on human rights violators through policy implementation.

To encourage people to support their cause and to cause their messages to be heard by decision-makers, both Amnesty and HRW make intensive use of the Internet and its many forums with strategies that either target the media agenda directly or via the public agenda, with the ultimate goal of influencing the political agenda. The intensive use of internet forums, as observed in this study, indicates that the relative importance of the news media in agenda setting may need to be re-evaluated.

To better understand agenda setting by international human rights organizations in the online environment, this study investigated how two major NGOs draw attention to human rights issues on the Internet. The first research question (RQ1) was: *What online communication activities are used by human rights organizations to initiate interaction on human rights issues?* The findings show that much emphasis is placed on online activities. Platforms are updated continuously and carefully linked in a multiplatform strategy. The social media provide rapid information about new activities, motivate involvement and invite users to access the web site for more detailed information. In this way both NGOs' communication activities serve to maintain inter-related internet platforms aimed at creating awareness of human rights issues and placing them high on the agenda.

The second research question (RQ2) was: *How are the online communication activities of human rights organizations linked with organizational agenda-setting policies?* The interviewees indicated that online activities are crucial in connecting with a wide audience, and hence mainly aim at the public agenda, although this cannot be seen in isolation from the media and political agendas. Through public attention the political agenda may be influenced not only, as mentioned above, in the case of petitions, but also in the case of a campaign aiming at public awareness and simultaneously at changes in legislation. Media attention can follow public attention or it can provide an alternative entry to the political agenda.

The emphasis in this study is different from that of most of the existing agenda-setting research. The focus is not on the influence of the media agenda on the public agenda and either through it or directly on the political agenda, but rather on the public agenda that, possibly reinforced by the media agenda, influences the political agenda.

This study was only a limited attempt to problematize the complexity of agenda setting in today's society. We suggest that there is a need for further research into the inter-relatedness of the public, media and political agendas, as our results indicate that the prevalence of online communication may change our understanding of agenda setting, although it is by no means clear how the picture may change in the years to come. It seems increasingly more difficult to keep the media, public and political agendas apart as they are so heavily intertwined in the social media.

The prevalence of online communication may also influence the relative dominance and the roles of the players involved. NGOs have primarily been mentioned in earlier agenda-setting research as a source for journalists or in the role of a political player, that is as an actor related to the media agenda or the political agenda, but this study suggests that their role in the public agenda is more important. Therefore, we suggest that future research investigates the interaction between the various actors. This may clarify the actual processes leading to the agenda-setting phenomenon, e.g. by including stakeholder theory and issues management.

For practitioners this study indicates that online communication may aim at agenda setting by means of well planned multiplatform strategies that combine the informal environment of the social media for fast real-time discussion, with the more formal environment of an internet site for detailed information.

As this study was based on the literature and only a limited empirical study, a broader investigation would be needed to gain a more complete picture of agenda setting by NGOs in the online environment. Also, the time-frame of the study was limited, and thus a content-analysis over a longer period and interviews with more NGOs is warranted. In addition, a comparison of NGO and company online communication strategies could be initiated. This study showed that for human rights organizations it is important to increase the salience of human rights issues by engaging in online media. It may be that companies have other goals that may call for different strategies in the online environment. It could be argued that agenda setting is especially important for human rights issues, as the principle of human rights is universally accepted and thus, rather than a change in opinions, the primary need is to get these issues high on the public, media and political agendas so as to institute preventive and corrective action in the case of human rights violations.

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II

FRAMING ISSUES IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE: THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

by

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Framing issues in the public debate: the case of human rights

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to better understand how issues may be framed in public debate. The outcomes of this debate affect organizations. The study is based on the seven types of framing identified by Hallahan (1999) and scrutinizes which of these types is utilized, and how this is done, in the case of human rights issues.

Design/Methodology/Approach – For this study a secondary analysis of academic papers on human rights issues was conducted. After a literature search, 40 papers originating from 23 different journals were further analysed. Where the researchers described the framing of human rights issues, the type of framing was identified according to the typology and mode of utilization.

Findings – In the case of human rights all seven framing types were found; however, the most common were the framing of attributes in which the economic or cultural context was emphasized, and the framing of situations pointing out power differences between the actors.

Research limitations/implications – The study underlines the complexity of framing and the importance of awareness of framing processes. It shows that the framing typology provides valuable insights into the debate on social issues, inspiring further research.

Practical implications – This study provides a better understanding of the processes of issue framing, an important part of corporate communication strategies.

Social implications – The study adds to actor and audience awareness of framing.

Originality/value – Insights from framing theory are applied to the debate on social issues, thereby offering a fresh perspective on research in this field and relevant to corporate social responsibility.

Keywords – Framing, issues management, human rights.

Paper type - Research paper

1 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to better understand how issues may be framed in the public debate. Organizations participate in this debate because the outcomes affect them. This paper discusses current insights from framing theory to clarify the process of framing and why it is important in the public debate. Furthermore, a framing typology, based on Hallahan (1999), which can serve as a basis for analyzing the debate on issues, is described. Next, the methodology is explained and the case of human rights issues is introduced. To further analyse the framing of human rights issues in the public debate, a secondary analysis of scientific papers is conducted. Based on this analysis, conclusions are drawn on how human rights issues are framed, and how the types of framing used in the public debate can be further investigated.

The concept issue refers to how a topic is seen and discussed. According to Hallahan (2001, p. 28), “Issues are social constructions that can exist independently of the verifiable conditions on which they are based”. Consequently, people can perceive the same issue differently and emphasize different aspects of an issue in expressing their views. Social issues often concern broader problems that are relevant for various actors with different views and interests; examples include product safety and the environment (Carroll, 1979).

Solving such a problem may need action by more actors, including companies, which in turn calls for dialogue. This dialogue is in part conducted within the public debate. Human rights are a good example of a social issue, since these rights are universally accepted as a principle and yet often violated. Violations need to be investigated, and this process calls for the participation of multiple parties.

A better understanding of framing processes helps organizational decision-making on issues management and communication strategies in the public debate. In the interaction on issues, participants may be individuals and representatives of companies, governmental organizations, and/or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Discussion on social issues is often initiated by NGOs. A previous paper in this journal focused on agenda setting by human rights organizations (Meriläinen and Vos, 2011); this paper goes beyond the drawing of attention to issues and investigates processes of framing, with a focus on how human rights issues are portrayed in the public debate. The aim is to further understanding on the framing of issues. How to frame an issue is a strategy choice that has an impact on the course of the public debate. Organizations need to be aware of the ways in which framing may be used by all the actors in the debate.

1.1 Framing of issues

At its core, framing refers to the placing of emphasis on particular aspects of the object of interest. According to Entman (1993, p. 52) to frame means “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation”. As framing stresses certain aspects over others, it is a selective process (Lecheler and De Vreese, 2010). Framing affects how the public views items (Brewer and Gross, 2005). Framing may work in two ways: indirectly, where the goal is to influence belief importance, and directly, where new considerations and connections between thoughts are aimed at (De Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko, 2011). Framing is an ongoing process, which has effects on the surrounding environments and publics (Benford and Snow, 2000). Framing makes some aspects of an issue more salient in the definition of situations, thus providing context. Moreover, both topic and situation affect how opinions are shared (Hayes, 2007).

Originally, the news media in particular were seen as the instigators of framing. Cohen (1963, p. 13) stated that “The press... may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about*.” This refers to agenda setting in the media, which has been discussed by many authors (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Sheafer, 2007; Larcinese, Puglisi and Snyder Jr., 2011). Framing is used in different ways, but generally coverage of issues by the media has an effect on public opinion (Dunaway, Branton and Abrajano, 2010). Journalists make choices in emphasizing issues and in the use of phrases and images, which then influence public perceptions (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, 1997). The influence of the media, however, goes beyond agenda setting; framing occurs when the particular way in which issues are characterized in the media has an influence on how they are understood by the audience (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

While the news media have an important role in the process of framing issues, changes in communication technology and civil society have created a more complex picture. Uscinski (2009) argues that the power of the media to influence public opinion should not be overestimated, and proposes the concept of an audience-driven framework, where the public also influences the media. Many actors may be involved in the debate on various media platforms. Framing is visible in the news media, but also in the social media and in interpersonal communication.

Framing can be seen as an activity involving several actors, each influencing what aspects of an issue are regarded as salient by the other actors. The aim of framing may be to influence values and beliefs, or to influence decision-making and behaviour. Both objectives are

interconnected, as once values are affected, behaviour may ensue and vice versa. Brewer and Gross (2005) describe a value frame as a connection between a value and an issue, presenting a particular aspect of an issue as being right. Values are essential motivational beliefs about outcomes or favourable modes of individual behaviour (Kilburn, 2009). Therefore, actors operate as moral entrepreneurs, and influence opinions through value-setting.

The public is not a homogeneous entity; rather, people have different values and experiences, and therefore different frames can be important to different people. Issues become salient to people when they are familiar with them and have experience of them (Thøgersen, 2006). The salience of an issue can be enhanced through exposing people frequently to familiar frames (Nelson, Oxley and Clawson, 1997; Chong and Druckman, 2007). Consequently, when an issue is salient to people, they are likely to do a considerable amount of processing of that issue because they are both motivated and able, due to their cognitive abilities, to do so (Petty, Cacioppo and Goldman, 1981). Thus, actors can frame an issue as salient either through value framing or familiarity framing.

An issue does not exist in isolation of other issues, and may remain relevant for about four to six weeks (Winter and Eyal, 1981). The effects of different frames vary (De Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko, 2011). According to Hilgartner and Bosk (1988) it is frames that compete with each other for the attention of publics. According to Zhu (1992), framing is directed by the zero-sum game rule, like agenda setting in which the raising of one issue leads to the demise of another. The selective interests of people influence how many issues can be salient at any one time. Using the right kind of frame can help achieve salience for more than just one issue at a time. To select which issues to focus on for framing calls for issues management.

1.2 Issues management

Issues management was introduced as a field of public relations in the business environment in the mid-seventies (Heath and Nelson, 1988 and 2002). From the perspective of an individual organization it encourages anticipation of the interests of public groups by monitoring the public debate on issues related to its core functions, and deciding where and when to participate in that debate. According to Heath (1998, p. 274), "Issues management is a function dedicated to helping organizations to understand and strategically adapt to their public policy environment." It contributes to social coherence by creating a dialogue "between the organizational culture and that of publics and stakeholders within the larger society" (Bowen and Heath, 2005, p. 85). Organizations cannot afford to distance themselves from their social environment, but need to have a reflective and inclusive approach (Waymer and Heath, 2007). During issues management analysis, the salience of issues related to the organization and its stakeholders as well as suitable

communication tools are evaluated (Vos and Schoemaker, 2006). Issues managers are responsible for analyzing issues and making strategic decisions about which issues are relevant (Bowen, 2004).

According to Coombs (1992), involvement in public policies is the original and the biggest objective of issues management - it is a proactive task of addressing internal and external issues. In the long term this type of participation can also enhance an organization's value creation and thus help it to outperform competitors (Hillman and Keim, 2001). From the perspective of the individual organization, issues management can be seen as a tool; however, it needs a dialogue in which publics and other organizations are taken into account. Issues may be related to company crises. Coombs and Holladay (2007) pointed out the relevance of emotions in such cases. Emotions are also important when issues are discussed in the social media. Coombs suggests the notion of issue contagion to describe the fast development of issues in the internet environment (Coombs, 2002).

In debate on social issues, larger numbers of actors, each with their own point of view, are involved, and the debate takes place on various platforms on the local, national or international level. These real or virtual platforms are known as issue arenas, where the attention devoted to issues changes over time, the actors may become more or less active and new actors may emerge (Luoma-aho and Vos, 2010). To participate effectively in issue arenas, an actor has to be familiar with the other actors and relate to their points of view on the issues concerned. For this purpose issues management, providing not only an overview of the issues and actors involved, but insight into the content of the issue and issue framing, is also needed.

1.3 Credibility, legitimacy and power

In the public debate, several actors can try to influence people's opinions. To become a central player in the issue arena, an actor needs perceived credibility, legitimacy and power. These characteristics are all connected to one another. Credibility, legitimacy and power influence not only framing, but also the ownership of issues. The reputation of an actor influences whether that actor can claim ownership to an issue (Meijer and Kleinnijenhuis, 2006). Actors can thus achieve prominence in their stand on issues if they have high credibility, legitimacy and power.

According to Druckman (2001), a precondition for successful framing is perceived *source credibility*. Actors can use their source credibility also to create issue credibility. People choose which frames to follow depending on the actors who present the frames. Coombs (1992) emphasizes *legitimacy* and suggests as a first step establishing issue legitimacy to attract publics to the issue, as a second step the organization's own legitimacy to get the audience to listen to its

ideas, and as a third step policy proposal legitimacy to support the policy proposals for resolving issues.

Not all actors are equally able to define issues as salient by demonstrating *power* in functioning as gatekeepers. Only the bigger and central actors, called hubs, can influence issue salience, while smaller actors may need to collaborate with them to do so (Carpenter, 2010, 2011). If more actors compete in the same arena, the actor whose frame is accepted and who is more credible, legitimate and powerful, will own the issue in the debate. As Petrocik (1996, p. 847) observes, to gain issue ownership, “issue handling competence is the key”.

If an actor has ownership of an issue, this may enable power. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) mention two kinds of power, decision-making and non-decision making. In decision-making the actor participates to make other actors decide something, whereas in non-decision-making, issues are intentionally kept out of the discussion, which may render them less visible (Anton, 2007, p. 25). Lukes (1974) added a third kind of power, the ability to influence public values and points of view.

Different actors appear more credible, legitimate and powerful to different groups of people. For example, an organization may be seen as an authority in a familiar issue arena while in a new issue arena it needs to make an effort to enjoy the same kind of legitimacy. Without legitimacy, issue managers are left without a voice or the attention of publics (Coombs, 1992). The interaction between the actors in the issue arena may change public perceptions of their credibility, legitimacy and power. Once actors have successfully framed an issue, they have established their position and acquired better possibilities to engender discussion and influence opinions on a later occasion.

1.4 Types of framing

As discussed above, issues are considered to be a social construct, and issues represent broad complex topics involving various actors with different points of view. In their communication about an issue, different actors emphasize different aspects of that issue. Which aspects are emphasized depends on the strategy chosen. The effectiveness of a framing strategy will be influenced by the perceived credibility, legitimacy and power of the actors.

Framing strategies can be very diverse, but can nevertheless be categorized according to a framing typology. Each framing type emphasizes different aspects of the issue. Hallahan (1999) introduced seven types of framing: framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibilities and news. For social issues all seven types of framing may be relevant. For example, framing of the situation entails setting the scene by stressing how the actors are

interrelated and, for example, making it clear who is the underdog in the situation. In this study this typology is applied to social issues.

The way in which an issue is framed shows how it is seen. When discussing an issue, different descriptions and arguments are used that emphasize different aspects of the issue. People are invited to see the situation in a particular light, which may affect their views on the issue. The choice of framing strategy will depend on the issue and the interests of the actor. The interplay of the actors in the debate may exhibit different types of framing.

2. Method

This paper aims to contribute to understanding of how issues may be framed in the public debate, by investigating which types of framing are used and how this is done. The authors do not take a normative point of view, accepting or rejecting particular types of framing; on the contrary we assume that communication and sense making is not possible without emphasizing some elements and leaving out others, i.e., without framing a topic one way or another. Making actors and audiences more aware of framing may clarify the dialogue on issues.

As there are numerous social issues, the focus here is on one area, human rights. Human rights issues have been discussed broadly and included in UN treaties. The Declaration of Human Rights was drafted after the Second World War in 1948, but human rights continue to be violated throughout the world. Human rights issues are recognized as social issues and debated by multiple actors.

The research questions are the following: Which types of framing are used in the debate on human rights issues (RQ1)? How is framing used to increase the salience of human rights issues (RQ2)?

The material for the analysis was collected from scientific papers, as many exist on the topic of human rights and how they are discussed. The scientific literature on human rights was chosen as the data source as it summarizes multiple views on these issues. It also describes issues in detail, along with examples of multiple cases, while giving a broad overview, including views of e.g. NGOs, states and corporations. A thematic analysis of refereed academic papers was conducted to clarify the framing of human rights issues in the literature.

2.1. Operationalizing the types of framing

The types of framing were based on the typology by Hallahan (1999), who identified seven types of framing (see section 1.4). To operationalize the types of framing in the case of social issues, the researchers studied the description of the types given by Hallahan (1999) in order to adhere

as closely as possible to his typology. The labels and descriptions of the types were adapted to facilitate their application to social issues. To distinguish ‘framing of attributes’ from the other types, we added context, as this may be done by linking the issue to a context or to other topics. Thus, this form of framing emphasizes the link with related topics and how issues are connected with one another. For ‘framing of choices’ the description referred to how risky the choices were portrayed as being, and so we rephrased this type as ‘focus on risky choices’, as many social issues are related to risks and in the interaction a high level of risk may be suggested to influence perceptions. In the description of ‘framing of issues’, Hallahan emphasizes the kind of issue in question, hence we rephrased this as ‘focus on the kind of issue’, as in our case the whole list of framing types was to be applied to social issues. These small adaptations remained faithful to Hallahan. As we earlier defined framing as rendering some aspects more salient in a communicating text (Entman, 1993) and acknowledged that this emphasizes certain elements over others, we refer to this process as adding a focus on certain aspects.

Based closely on the typology of Hallahan (1999) we list the following types of framing of social issues:

1. *Focus on situations* allows examination of the interrelatedness of actors, their interests and relations, e.g. paying attention to who is top dog and who is an underdog.
2. *Focus on context attributes* focuses on characteristics that are emphasized or ignored, linking the issue to a context or other topics.
3. *Focus on risky choices* means evaluating situations where uncertainty is present, stressing the uncertainties and risks involved.
4. *Focus on actions* refers to evaluating the beneficial or problematic consequences of issues, making action appear necessary in achieving desired goals or avoiding negative consequences.
5. *Focus on the kind of issue* involves alternative ways of looking at the issue as a relevant social or economic problem, by emphasizing e.g. political, legal, historical, cultural or economic aspects of the issue.
6. *Focus on responsibilities* examines the responsibilities of actors and their role in the events of interest, e.g. attributing cause and blame.
7. *Focus on news* means emphasizing the news as a source and newsworthy elements of events.

2.2 Thematic analysis

The literature was found by a metasearch via the EBSCO host and adding papers by the snowball technique. For the literature search several keywords were used: human rights, human rights NGOs, framing and issue attention. No year boundaries were used in the literature search, which was concluded in September 2011.

The literature search provided 50 papers that were first checked to see if they indeed fitted the keywords. After this check, 40 papers were chosen for the analysis. They came from 23 different journals. The biggest number of articles came from the *Human Rights Quarterly* with 11 papers. The second highest number came from the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* with 3 articles. The journals with two articles were *International Organizations*, *The American Journal of International Law*, *Human Rights Review*, *International Studies Quarterly*, and *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. The remaining journals provided one paper each.

Each of the 40 papers was read and analysed. Where the authors described the framing of human rights issues, the text fragments were copied into the database. Per paper, these totalled 29 fragments. A total of 500 fragments were entered into the database that consisted of a table containing 80 pages.

The seven types of framing served as a coding scheme. The size of a piece of coded text varied from a sentence to a multi-sentence chunk. They were coded by assigning the single most appropriate code in the list. This was done by one researcher while the second researcher, to increase reliability, checked the coding. After discussing about 20% of the codes to reach consensus, the coding was finalized.

In the next step the number of text fragments was added up, and a table and pie chart were made. Then the researchers went back to the database to reread the fragments, but now by framing type to summarize how each type of framing was utilized.

2.3 The case of human rights issues

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights consists of 30 articles and includes, for example, the following: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” (UN, 1948: article 4 and 5).

Human rights have been universally accepted as a principle and affect everyone. States and corporations, however, may permit human rights violations to occur since such violations are profitable and are deemed to be justified to achieve a certain political goal (Engle, 2004; Muchlinski, 2001). Multinational corporations and private security forces have been accused of violating human rights (e.g. Weiss and Shamir, 2011), while sanctions have also been used to pressure states to better their human rights (Goldstone, 2011). Another example is the trafficking

and exploitation of women, a large scale criminal business (Hughes, 2000), which is allowed to continue through the practices of western organizations (Bell and Keenan, 2004; Mendelson, 2005). From the perspective of corporate social responsibility companies address human rights issues.

In the public debate attention to human rights issues is often initiated by human rights organizations that investigate and report human rights violations, for examples Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Human rights organizations have been successful in putting human rights issues on the public, media and political agendas (Dhir, 2007; Soh, 1996) and they have had an impact on human rights performance (Murdie, 2009). Human rights and how they are discussed have been studied in the academic literature, but this paper adds to the existing body of knowledge by its focus on the framing of human rights issues.

3. Findings

The research questions for the study were: Which types of framing are used in the debate on human rights issues (RQ1)? How is framing used to increase the salience of human rights issues (RQ2)? We will first look at RQ1 and then at the results regarding RQ2.

3.1 Types of framing found

To answer the first research question, all seven framing types described in the previous section were identified in the human rights literature. According to the thematic analysis, altogether 500 framing examples were found in the 40 scientific articles. The large number of fragments found in the articles showed that the more general types of framing also occur in human right issues. Most of the articles, 73%, had 10 to 29 fragments, while two articles had only one fragment. The differences can be explained because the papers selected focused to a greater or lesser extent specifically on human rights.

All seven types of framing were mentioned, indicating that different aspects of human rights issues are emphasized, although in very different numbers. Figure 1 shows a pie chart with the results of the thematic analysis per framing type, while table 1 shows the numbers and percentages of the framing types found.

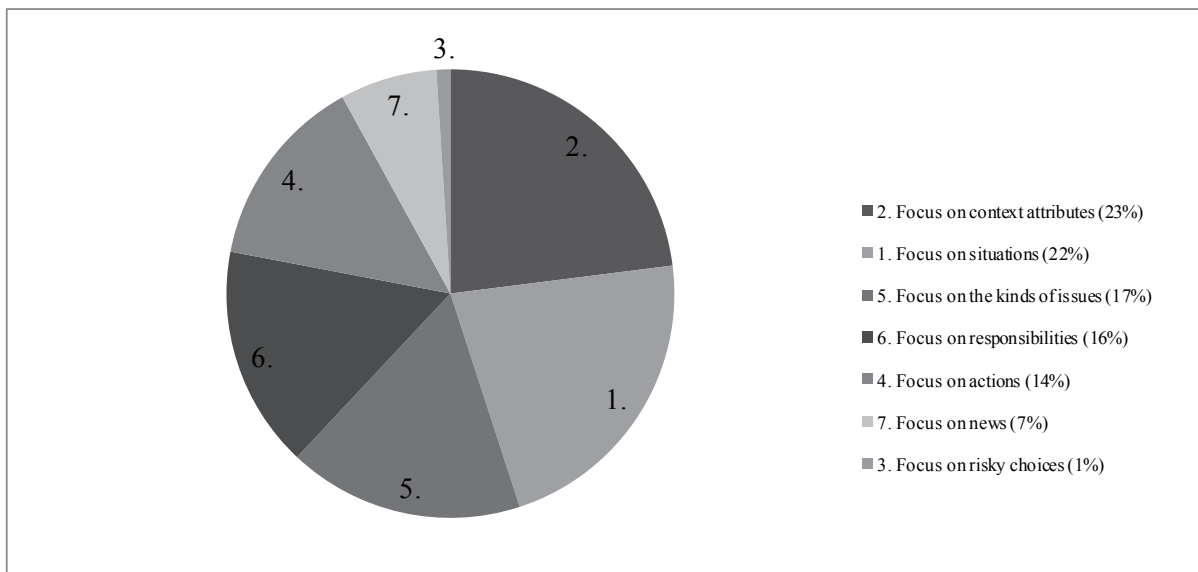


Figure 1 Pie chart of the framing types found (listed from biggest to smallest numbers).

The most commonly used types were focus on context attributes and situations, each constituting almost a quarter of the fragments. Types less often used were focus on the kind of issue, responsibilities and actions. The least used types were focus on news and risky choices.

Table 1 Overview showing how often each type of framing was used.

Framing type	Number of times used	Percentage used
1. Focus on situations	112	22%
2. Focus on context attributes	116	23%
3. Focus on risky choices	4	1%
4. Focus on actions	69	14%
5. Focus on the kind of issue	87	17%
6. Focus on responsibilities	79	16%
7. Focus on news	33	7%
Sum	500	100%

The context of human rights issues and the actors involved are frequently addressed in the literature, while other aspects, such as news or risks, are less often discussed. In the framing types used no clear change was observed over the years; the dispersion pattern seems to depend more on the area (in this case human rights issues) than on the year. The cases discussed in the

sample of the human rights literature varied greatly. Most discussed were e.g. oil companies, workers' rights, human trafficking, rape, women's rights, genocide and the significance of human rights treaties.

3.2 How is framing used?

To investigate RQ2, that is, in what ways framing is used to increase the salience of human rights issues, a closer look was taken at each framing type and how it was used in the literature.

1. Focus on situations

This framing type examines the interrelatedness of actors, their interests and relations, e.g. paying attention to who is top dog and who is an underdog. In the literature there were many fragments in which the power of the different actors involved was discussed, thereby providing an explanation of the factors leading to the continuance of human rights violations. In some cases this suggested directions for finding rational solutions, or in other cases, in a more emotional appeal, portrayed the situation as a battle between David and Goliath. Examples are given below:

A further consequence is that the international human rights regimes are comparatively weak compared to, say, the regimes of finance or trade (Neumayer, 200, p. 926).

Clearly reconciliation cannot occur where power relationships remain unchanged, where "truth" continues to be defined by the dominant group, and where the marginalized groups remain outside the negotiation of discourse (Mazzei, 2011, p. 439).

2. Focus on context attributes

This type of framing examines characteristics that are emphasized or ignored by linking the issue to a context or other topics. In the literature the cultural context of human rights violations was addressed. Furthermore, there were many fragments in which the human rights perspective of an issue was emphasized in order to draw attention to a desired change. For example, environmental issues were linked to human rights issues to gain more attention. Similarly, climate change was related to human rights and inequality ('apartheid'):

First, the testimonies of women made it apparent that violence against women may differ across regions and countries but that it is a universal phenomenon. Second, in their testimonies, women assigned blame to patriarchal structures and traditions for the existence of the problem. Lastly, the testimonies were dramatic (Joachim, 2003, p. 255).

This linkage between human rights and environmental protection is gaining greater traction now in a variety of ways. A growing cross-section of civil society actors, high-level state representatives, and academics, for one thing, is arguing that the roots of climate change lie not solely in market failures, for example, or the inadequate deployment of green technologies, but rather in exploitative relations of power (Nicholson and Chong, 2011, p. 122).

Climate apartheid (Nicholson and Chong, 2011, p. 128).

3. Focus on risky choices

This type of framing entails evaluating situations where uncertainty is present, stressing the uncertainties and risks involved. In some of the literature fragments, human rights issues were presented in such a manner that emphasis was placed on risks created by doing or not doing something, highlighting threats or danger:

First and foremost, all those actors concerned with human rights protection, internal and external, should recognize that a peace process contains both opportunities and threats for the protection of human rights. It should be recognized that many of these opportunities and threats cannot be appropriately planned for, and that difficulties and mistakes are inevitable (Bell and Keenan, 2004, p. 372-373).

Returning to Burma is often not an option, due to fighting, fear of military patrols, and fear of rape. Returning to Thailand often means returning to the sex trade (Beyrer, 2001, p. 546).

4. Focus on actions

This framing type evaluates the beneficial or problematic consequences of issues, making action appear necessary in achieving desired goals or avoiding negative consequences. In the literature the importance of human rights organizations in creating solutions in the case of human rights violations was stressed. Next to positive aspects, negative aspects were also addressed, emphasizing what may happen if human rights organizations or other actors are unable to initiate global solutions:

It is because of the complicated and highly political nature of the relationship between globalization and human rights that the anti-globalization social movement has emerged (Howard-Hassmann, 2005, p. 16).

NGOs including HRW and AI condemned the Israeli operation and presented a chronology that downplayed or erased the context of Hamas attacks that preceded the Israeli incursion (Steinberg, 2011, p. 38).

5. Focus on the kind of issue

This type of framing involves alternative ways of looking at an issue as a relevant social or economic problem. By emphasizing e.g. political, legal, historical, cultural or economic aspects of an issue, actors are able to view the issue from alternative perspectives. In the literature fragments, this type of framing was used to portray issues as human rights issues that previously were not seen as such. In the case of economic or legal matters the human rights aspects were emphasized:

Far from enjoying the fruits of prosperity, women in the Niger Delta have been adversely impacted by oil exploration. Ethnic violence fueled by competition over oil money has destroyed lives in many villages across Southeast Nigeria (Dhir, 2007, p. 80).

In sum, international law has an important role to play in constructing a better functioning global regime to govern business and human rights. The effectiveness of its contributions will be maximized if it is embedded within, and deployed in support of, an overall strategy of increasing governance capacity in the face of enormously complex and ever-changing forces of globalization (Ruggie, 2007, p. 840).

6. Focus on responsibility

This framing type examines the responsibilities of actors and their role in the events in question, e.g. attributing cause and blame. In the literature, the responsibilities of various actors were discussed, with an emphasis on what could be expected from companies and states in supporting human rights, as well as pointing out actors that had contributed to human rights violations:

First, MNEs (Multinational enterprises) are in business. Their only social responsibility is to make profits for their shareholders. Second, private non-state actors, such as MNEs, do not have any positive duty to observe human rights. Their only duty is to obey the law. Thus it is for the state to regulate on matters of social importance and for MNEs to observe the law. Third, which human rights are MNEs to observe? They may have some influence over social and economic matters...but they can do nothing to protect civil and political rights (Muchlinski, 2001, p. 35).

New human rights abuses may enter the field with the entry of peace-keepers and the international community itself. Problems of accountability of international personnel involved in governance more generally have emerged in Bosnia, and to a greater extent in the United Nations administrations in

Kosovo and East Timor. Problems of trafficking against women, sexual slavery and rape have all been well documented as issues that accompany armies, including peace-keepers (Bell and Keenan, 2004, p. 342).

7. Focus on news

This type of framing means emphasizing the news as a source and newsworthy elements of an issue. The literature addressed how news stories are used as a source of information on human rights issues, and how the media agenda may affect the public agenda in drawing attention to human rights. In many fragments the importance of discussing human rights issues in the news media was emphasized. This concerns not only whether human rights violations are reported in the media but also the way in which they are portrayed:

For better or worse, media coverage of this propagandized “review” of the Holocaust was extensive. Implicit in the coverage, it seemed, was the impression that what was happening in Tehran was somehow typical of a broader trend of Holocaust denial throughout the world, and particularly in the Third, or developing, World... A closer examination of the Tehran conference reveals, however, that most presenters constituted a well-known, if not notorious, group of First World Holocaust deniers (Miles, 2009, p. 506).

The literature on media framing of public policy suggests that the media coverage of human trafficking has been framed in a way that has marginalized alternative views on trafficking and criticisms of current policy and, as a result, legitimized the dominant view on trafficking and approach to combating trafficking (Gulati, 2011, p. 367).

3.3 Framing of human rights issues

All seven types of framing were found among the literature fragments on human rights and the analysis clarified in which way each type was used. Table 2 presents a summary of the results.

Table 2 Summary of types of framing found and their use in the case of human rights issues.

Type of framing	Percentage	Application to human rights issues
Focus on context attributes	23 %	Linking issues to a human rights frame, by emphasizing human rights aspects and adding a human rights point of view to the issue
Focus on situations	22 %	Addressing the power of various actors and inter-relations of human rights NGOs and other actors
Focus on the kind of	17 %	Relating human rights to other issues and placing human

issue		rights in an economic or cultural context
Focus on responsibility	16 %	Addressing the responsible actors in human rights violations and stressing their responsibility in the issue
Focus on news	7 %	How human rights issues are portrayed in the news and how news stories are used as a source of information on human rights issues
Focus on risky choices	1 %	Emphasizing threats related to human rights issues and risks of acting or not acting on human rights violations

4. Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of this paper was to better understand how issues are framed in the public debate. The study was based on the seven types of framing identified by Hallahan (1999) and scrutinized which of these types were utilized, and how this was done, in the case of human rights issues. The data were derived from an analysis of a sample of the academic literature on human rights. This offered a broad overview of cases, yielding different viewpoints. Thematic analysis provided an understanding of how human rights issues are framed.

The research questions were, which types of framing are used in the debate on human rights issues (RQ1), and how is framing used to increase the salience of human rights issues (RQ2)? To answer these questions, a thematic analysis of 40 reviewed articles was conducted in which the seven types of framing served as a coding scheme.

First, to answer RQ1, all seven framing types were identified in the human rights material. Altogether 500 frame fragments were found in the 40 articles. The most commonly used framing types were the focus on context attributes in which the economic or cultural context was emphasized, and focus on situations pointing out power differences between the actors.

Second, to answer RQ2, the use of each framing type was summarized. Examples provided in the literature in respect of human rights issues indicate that human rights issues are framed in different ways and emphasis is given according to the specific issue, environment and audience. The interconnectedness of issues was noted; for example climate change was linked to human rights. Furthermore, when portraying an issue, power differences between the actors, e.g. between human rights organizations and corporations, were emphasized. If the goal is to gain salience for human rights over a long period of time, it seems probable that not all issues can be framed in the same manner, and with time particular issues may need new frames to render them salient again. Using frames that resonate with public perceptions may help in achieving issue salience. Since human rights issues are sensitive, the frame needs to be chosen carefully. It

should be noted that not all instances of framing will be intentional and framing cannot be avoided, as all storylines are the outcome of a process of selection.

This study, by underlining the complexity of framing, has implications for practice. It shows that the actors in the debate need to be aware of framing processes. In issues management the details of framing processes need to be taken into account. Framing emphasizes particular aspects of an issue. Different actors will frame an issue differently in accordance with their interests. Not everyone has an equal say in the public debate, as the factors of credibility, legitimacy and power differ. The actors may set their own objectives and seek to raise the level of specific factors. Actors may also aim at keeping issues out of the discussion. Effective framing requires decision-making, while also taking the behaviour of other actors in the debate into account. Framing draws attention to different aspects of an issue in a selective manner, emphasizing some and downplaying others. Therefore, framing, like agenda setting, can be considered a zero-sum game (Meriläinen and Vos, 2011). Insight into the complexity of framing processes adds to awareness by actors and in this way contributes to decision-making on the organizational communication strategies to be deployed in the issue arena.

The study also has implications for research. It showed that investigating framing on the basis of Hallahan's (1999) typology provides a profound insight into the debate on issues, in this case human rights issues, revealing what is underlined in the debate by the various actors and revealing the interrelatedness of issues and the power structures that subsist between different actors.

Naturally, this study also has its limitations. It focused on a broad range of human rights issues, as discussed in the academic literature, providing a broad overview and examples illustrating all types of framing. However, the examples also showed that how each framing type was used depends on the issue and the actors involved. Therefore, we propose to investigate other issues by using this typology to scrutinize discourse in various case studies.

By investigating a particular issue in greater depth, the complexity of framing may be addressed further. In the public debate, a combination of frames may be used, as social issues are complex and involve many actors who aim at increasing their credibility, legitimacy and power. Organizations need to understand the behaviour of their stakeholders in the relevant issue arenas. Awareness of the types of framing used helps recognize the strategies of other actors in the debate. This facilitates decision-making on organizational communication strategies including which elements to emphasize in the public debate. This study contributes to this end by clarifying types of framing.

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III

FRAMING BY ACTORS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEBATE: THE KONY 2012 CAMPAIGN.

by

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Framing by Actors in the Human Rights Debate: the Kony 2012 Campaign

Abstract

Human rights actors form networks and debate in issue arenas to find solutions to violations. Framing can be used to create and increase issue salience as well as organisational importance, thus influencing power relations and the human rights debate. Not all the actors are equally powerful, meaning that the more dominant actors function as gatekeepers, controlling the debate and the subsequent decision-making process. The campaign Kony 2012 by Invisible Children (IC) is used as a case study to see whether, by observing the reaction the campaign elicited from two well-established gatekeepers (Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch), this campaign by a previously relatively unknown non-governmental organisation (NGO) had affects on issue salience and on the power relations between human rights NGOs. The findings show that IC was able to generate a buzz with its Kony 2012 campaign. It was able momentarily to influence power relations by producing new ideas and content. Notwithstanding, the two established actors, however, were quick to maintain their power positions as gatekeepers, an issue much discussed by Bob and Carpenter. Although as a result the existing power relations remained unchanged at the end of the monitoring period, this case study shows that social media may lower the threshold for new actors, supporting Barzilai-Nahon's notion of the power of less central actors in networks.

Keywords: Framing; Gatekeeper Theory; Power Relations; Non-governmental Organisations

Introduction

Human rights issues have largely been covered in the academic literature over the last decades by focusing on the role of different actors, such as non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), multinationals, states and individuals with influence on human rights performance. Much debate has been on the power relations between actors in the human rights networks. As Keck and Sikkink argue, NGOs operate in networks.¹ However, not all actors have the same power in the debate: for example some are able to act as gatekeepers while other, less central actors² have less influence on what issues are debated and how. This affects the context in the issues debated and subsequently the decision-making process concerning policies to tackle violations.

This article focuses on the power relations between the two central gatekeepers in the human rights arena, Amnesty International (Amnesty) and Human Rights Watch (HRW), and a new actor, Invisible Children (IC), through an online case study. An online case study was chosen because IC's Kony 2012 campaign was instigated online using the video streaming services YouTube and Vimeo, with additional multiplatform support from IC's main website and Facebook page, as well as its Twitter account. The responses of Amnesty and HRW were found on their main websites, since many organisations such as NGOs use their main websites to disseminate official information to large international publics.³

The research questions are: (RQ1) How did the gatekeeper NGOs, Amnesty and HRW, react to the new actor, IC? (RQ2) Did IC's Kony campaign affect the existing power relations in the NGO network? To answer these research questions, the response of Amnesty and HRW to IC and its Kony 2012 campaign is analysed. During an 18-week research period, content related to IC and the Kony 2012 campaign, along with all related content in the news sections of the websites of both gatekeeper NGOs, was monitored and a textual analysis of the related posts, totalling 24 altogether, conducted.

Before clarifying the method of analysis used and presenting the findings, insights from

1 ME Keck and K Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

2 K Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control" (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

3 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 *Corporate Communications, an Int J* 293–310.

the literature on issues arenas, gatekeeper theory and framing are discussed. The influential work of Keck and Sikkink⁴ shows that human rights NGOs operate in networks. This article discusses the interplay of three actors in one such network. Issue arena theory is used to clarify the communication context in the network.⁵ Gatekeeper theory is also drawn on, building on the insights of Bob⁶ and Carpenter⁷ on the roles of different actors in a debate and, in particular, the role of the dominant actors that function as gatekeepers. Additionally, insights from Barzilai-Nahon⁸ on the possibility of changes in power relations are also used. Framing theory is drawn on to clarify how actors present other actors or issues. Framing refers to providing a context for understanding an issue in a particular way, and often goes together with choosing a specific angle to emphasise certain aspects of the issue. According to Entman,⁹ the purpose of framing is “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation”. Framing is often used to increase the salience of a societal issue and draw attention to it in order to facilitate problem solving. It is only when an issue is seen as salient by the actors that it will attract enough attention to be discussed.

Issue Arenas and Network Power Relations

Human rights issues are topical agendas that are discussed in multiple issue arenas. Agendas are clusters of multiple issues formed by the actors who frame them. Issues become topical when there is debate about them by at least two actors. These actors can be individual people, states, organizations, NGOs or other groups. An issue exists when an action takes place based on the public’s shared interpretations of events and/or actions in their environment.¹⁰ Thus, an issue may be relevant but its legitimacy will depend on the interest and actions of the actors in the issue arena. Issues are discussed in issue arenas that

4 ME Keck and K Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

5 Vos, Schoemaker & Luoma-aho, “Setting the Agenda for Research on Issue Arenas”, (2014) 19 *Corporate Communications*, an *Int J.* 200–215

6 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009).

7 CR Carpenter, “Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks” (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

8 K Barzilai-Nahon, “Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control” (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

9 RM Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”(1993) 43 *J of Communication* 51–58, 52.

10 CH Botan & M Taylor, “Public Relations: State of the Field” (2004) 54 *J of Communication* 645–661.

may be real or virtual platforms,¹¹ such as parliaments, social media and organisations' boardrooms.

The actors who discuss and decide topics in issue arenas form networks. Networks can intertwine, actors can discuss issues on multiple issue arenas and belong to various networks. Lewin¹² introduced the concept of channels with gatekeepers. He pointed out that channels, referred to as networks in this article, have no simple beginning or end, but are circular in character: they intertwine and one channel can be part of another. Castells¹³ defines networks as sets of interconnected nodes that may have varying relevance to the networks they form. Keck and Sikkink¹⁴ studied NGO advocacy networks and concluded that

networks are forms of organization characterized by voluntary, shared, and horizontal patterns of communication exchange ... The network concept travels well because it stresses fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas. We call them advocacy networks because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition.

Additionally, Hudson¹⁵ holds that relationships are the building-blocks of networks and are balanced as well as prioritised on the basis of values. Lin¹⁶ added that individuals engage in interactions and networking in order to produce profits, which can be a better position in the network, the ability to set agendas and credibility and legitimacy, which in turn impact actors' overall power position. Similarly, Yanacopulos¹⁷ added that resources, such as funding, legitimacy and information, all have an impact on NGO networks.

Actors have power to varying degrees in the network as "power relationships are asymmetrical actual or potential interactions among social actors that enable one actor to exert greater control over another's behaviour".¹⁸ According to Pettigrew,¹⁹ a "power

11 Luoma-aho & Vos, "Towards a More Dynamic Stakeholder Model: The Role of Issue Arenas for Corporate Reputation" (2010) 15 *Corporate Communication*, an Int J 315–331.

12 K Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics. II Channels of Group Life; Social Planning and Action Research" (1947) 1(2) *Human Relations*, 143–153.

13 M Castells, *Communication Power* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009).

14 ME Keck & K Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1998).

15 A Hudson, "NGOs' Transnational Advocacy Networks: From 'Legitimacy' to 'Political Responsibility'?" (2001) 1 *Global Networks* 331–352.

16 N Lin, "Building a Network Theory of Social Capital" (1999) 22 *Connections* 28–51.

17 H Yanacopulos, "The Strategies that Bind: NGO Coalitions and their Influence" (2005) 5 *Global Networks* 93–110.

18 D Knoke, "Networks of Elite Structures and Decision Making" (1993) 22 *Sociological Methods & Research* 23–45, 24.

19 AM Pettigrew, "Information Control as a Power Source" (1972) 6 *Sociology* 187–204, (p. 188).

relation is a causal relation between the preferences of an actor regarding an outcome and the outcome itself ... It involves the ability of an actor to produce outcomes consonant with his perceived interests.” As multiple actors with similar or different interests are involved, there may be competition and alliance-forming within the network, also including power play. As Pallas and Urpelainen²⁰ argue, “in the absence of consensus, power becomes a key issue”. Power relations exist between gatekeepers with a central position in the network and less central actors. Although a comprehensive debate on power is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to acknowledge the role of power relations in issue arena debates. Thus, to better understand the reality of power relations inside networks, gatekeeper theory is also utilised.

Gatekeepers and Less-Central Actors

Not all actors in a debate will have the same power. This in turn will influence the debate as some actors will be able to act as gatekeepers and some will be less central.²¹ An actor who has power and uses it to steer a debate can influence understanding of the issues discussed and the context in which they are debated. This influences subsequent decision-making as some issue connections and contexts may be left out of the debate. Also actors, who present alternative viewpoints, may also be left out of the debate as a result.

Gatekeepers often have the power to decide the dominant frames and push and pull issues in the issue arena. Lewin²² was among the first to point out the gatekeeping role in various arenas of actors who were able to make decisions on salience. The more well-known human rights NGOs function as leaders in human rights debates. Carpenter²³ and Bob²⁴ refer to them as gatekeepers who use power.²⁵ Erickson Nepstad and Bob²⁶ also discuss the importance of such leaders in social movements.

20 CL Pallas & J Urpelainen, “Mission and Interests: The Strategic Formation and Function of North-South NGO Campaigns” (2013) 19 *Global Governance: A Rev of Multilateralism & Int Orgs* 401–423, 405.

21 K Barzilai-Nahon, “Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control” (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

22 K Lewin, “Frontiers in Group Dynamics. II Channels of Group Life; Social Planning and Action Research” (1947) 1(2) *Human Relations*, 143–153.

23 CR Carpenter, “Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks” (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

24 Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009).

25 CR Carpenter, “Vetting the Advocacy Agenda: Network Centrality and the Paradox of Weapons Norms” (2011) 65 *International Organization* 69–102.

The central hub theory explains that gatekeeper actors form a central hub, meaning that they form the decision-making centre of the network. They have the ability and means to lend visibility to issues.²⁷ In various networks where human rights are debated, NGOs are the central actors. Depending on their size and resources, human rights NGOs promote activism, conduct research, report abuses, and develop proposals for new human rights laws.²⁸ They define problems, create solutions and politicise issues, and thrive on mobilising structures outside established institutions.²⁹ Whereas HRW focuses on investigating, reporting and influencing policy decision-makers, Amnesty's biggest roles involve investigating and creating activism at the grassroots level.³⁰ According to an article written by the executive director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, the strength of NGOs such as HRW is their ability to investigate possible human rights violations and assign blame in order to shame violators.³¹ Roth claims that this core task of human rights NGOs works best when it is clear what the violation, perpetrator, and solution are. Naming and shaming are core activities of human rights NGOs. NGOs are needed to garner a response from large groups of people, as deteriorating human rights situations alone are not enough to convince the public to believe that rights are being violated.³²

Although consensus may sometimes be negotiated and found, and even gatekeeper status accepted by non-gatekeepers, in a situation where many actors in the network are participating in a debate, competition may well arise, including in human rights networks. In the competition over issues and frames, power over information ends up in the hands of those who can edit and credibly validate messages to communicate what is salient and correct. The ability to do this is a power resource of gatekeepers.³³ These main actors

26 S Erickson Nepstad & C Bob, "When do Leaders Matter? Hypotheses on Leadership Dynamics in Social Movements" (2006) 11 *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 1–22.

27 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009).

28 See K Martens, "Mission Impossible? Defining Nongovernmental Organizations" (2002) 13 *Voluntas: Int J of Voluntary & Nonprofit Organisations* 271–285; Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 *Corporate Communications, an Int J* 293.; D Davis, A Murdie & C Garnett Steinmetz, "'Makers and Shapers': Human Rights INGOs and Public Opinion" (2012) 34 *Human Rights Quarterly* 199–224.

29 J Joachim, "Framing Issues and Seizing Opportunities: Women's Rights and the UN" (2003) 47 *Int Studies Quarterly* 247–274.

30 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 *Corporate Communications, an Int J* 293–310;

Meriläinen & Vos, "Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights" (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

31 K Roth, "Defending Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Practical Issues Faced by an International Human Rights Organization" (2004) 26 *Human Rights Quarterly* 63–73.

32 D Davis, A Murdie & C Garnett Steinmetz, "'Makers and Shapers': Human Rights INGOs and Public Opinion" (2012) 34 *Human Rights Quarterly* 199–224.

33 RO Keohane & JS Nye Jr, "Power and Interdependence in the Information Age" (1998) 77 *Foreign Affairs* 81–94.

control the debate and accept frames. By wielding their power over communication, gatekeepers in the central hub can intentionally keep certain issues or points of view out of the debate or even prevent actors with special interests from participating and promote only agendas favourable to their own interests.³⁴

The above suggests a rather stable network situation. The distribution of position, resources and power between actors undeniably determines which actors get to set the network agenda.³⁵ However, power is not only a matter of who possesses it, but also of control over resources and the skill with which it is used.³⁶ In issue arenas, the power struggle is unceasing. If an actor is not able to utilise a position of power, then more skilful actors may take over and discredit the less capable actor. Therefore, neither a particular actor's power nor the actors that form the central hubs in the networks are stable entities. Power relations and central hubs can be affected by framing, which can change the debate and, subsequently, the outcome. Outcomes can vary from opinions or behavioural changes among the public through new domestic policies to international laws over human rights. In power relations, the focus should not be on the gatekeepers alone but also on the less central actors. Barzilai-Nahon states that the less central, the gated, can have power in relation to gatekeepers if they exhibit a combination of four attributes: political power in relation to the gatekeeper(s), the ability to produce information, a relationship with the gatekeeper(s), and alternatives to the gatekeeper(s).³⁷ Thus, by means of content production, control of agendas and frames, relationship-building and producing alternatives to the debate, the less-central can change the course of the debate and influence power relations. Moreover, fragmentation and tension within the network can lead actors to form competing networks and alliances³⁸ with their own central hubs, which can then challenge the original central hub and power relations in the network and issue arena.

34 See P Bachrach & MS Baratz, "Two Faces of Power" (1962) 56 *American Pol Sci Rev* 947–952; JH Rowbottom, "Media Freedom and Political Debate in the Digital Era" (2006) 69 *Modern Law Rev* 489–513; A Anton, "Socialist Voices", in A Anton & R Schmitt (eds), *Toward a New Socialism* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 21–52.

35 LW Bennett, K Foot & M Xenos, "Narratives and Network Organization: A Comparison of Fair Trade Systems in Two Nations" (2011) 61 *J of Communication* 219–245.

36 AM Pettigrew, "Information Control as a Power Source" (1972) 6 *Sociology* 187–204, 188.

37 K Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control" (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

38 LW Bennett, K Foot & M Xenos, "Narratives and Network Organization: A Comparison of Fair Trade Systems in Two Nations" (2011) 61 *J of Communication* 219–245.

Clearly, power is more than just Dahl's notion of A statically having influence over B.³⁹ Moreover, debates do not take place in only one issue arena. The position and salience of gatekeepers, the less central actors, issues and arenas are constantly in flux. Having resources or belonging to a central hub can be a sign of power, and thus confer a position as a central actor. Yet power relations can also be influenced by studying and understanding the actors in issue arenas and their strategic framing and communication practices. Furthermore, new alliances can be formed to take on the central hubs. A wider perspective on power and framing can provide a better understanding of issue adoption processes and power relations in the arenas of human rights issues. Additionally, the selective nature of framing in network relations should be addressed, given that this influences the debate and subsequent decision-making.

Framing and Selective Realities in Networks

Framing can hardly be avoided, as any storyline results in emphasising some matters above others. However, it is often done with a purpose, as a thought process with strategic functions and aims. Different actors use different framing models to further their own agendas.⁴⁰ New frames can also be created by real-world events like the Arab Spring or oil disasters. Independent actors can successfully push their frames into several arenas and gain credibility for their views if events are favourable and frames by other actors are seen as unreliable or propagandist.⁴¹ Indeed, circumstances can make issues salient and create new frames which actors must then address.

Framing involves not only justifying one's own stand on issues but also elements of guidance and education. Druckman mentions that "Framing effects may occur, not because elites seek to manipulate citizens, but rather because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance".⁴² He adds that the public then chooses which frames to accept and hence that this is not manipulation but guidance.⁴³ However, if other actors or the general public do

39 Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power" (1957) 2 *Behav Sci* 201–215.

40 C Roggeband & R Vliegenthart, "Divergent Framing: The Public Debate on Migration in the Dutch Parliament and Media 1995–2004" (2007) 30 *West European Politics* 524–548; JW Busby, "Bono Made Jesse Helms Cry: Jubilee 2000, Debt Relief, and Moral Action in International Politics" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 247–275.

41 N Hamdy & EH Goma, "Framing the Egyptian Uprising in Arabic Language Newspapers and Social Media" (2012) 62 *J of Communication* 195–211.

42 JN Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" (2001) 63 *J of Politics* 1041–1066, 1061.

43 JN Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" (2001) 63 *J of Politics* 1041–1066, 1061.

not share the values promoted by the frames, then there can be no consensus about their importance.

Values are essential motivational beliefs about outcomes or favourable modes of individual behaviour.⁴⁴ As such, they are a key aspect of framing.⁴⁵ A value frame connects issues and values.⁴⁶ Framing may be unsuccessful if actors do not share the value set or accept a new value frame.⁴⁷ For example, some organisations may intentionally discredit frames by human rights actors by opposing them with security or fear frames, in which case the actors must reframe the myths of fear and anxiety in terms of fact and truth.⁴⁸ Moreover, using bandwagon framing – where multiple frames are combined⁴⁹ – can lead to the issue gaining new salience. An example of this is combining human rights frames with environmental protection frames in order to gain attention for the latter, much as suggested by Nicholson and Chong.⁵⁰

Every issue arena will contain multiple frames and issues, but only a few can be relevant at one and the same time. Social issues, such as human rights issues, do not operate independently. Earlier, Winter and Eyal argued that social issues can only remain relevant for from four to six weeks.⁵¹ The issue attention cycle by Downs comprises five evolutionary stages, starting with the pre-problem stage, moving to the euphoric stage, realisation of costs stage, the decline stage and finally to the post-stage, where they are replaced by new issues.⁵² Hilgartner and Bosk⁵³ criticised Downs' model for not taking into account competing issues, since issues and frames compete with each other for the attention of decision-makers and citizens. The critique is valid, given the dynamic nature of debates in issue arenas, illustrating the power of frames and the competition between them. Additionally social media and the Internet, such as NGO websites, have also

44 WH Kilburn, "Personal Values and Public Opinion" (2009) 90 *Soc Sci Quarterly* 868–885.

45 Meriläinen & Vos, "Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights" (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

46 PR Brewer & K Gross, "Values, Framing and Citizens' Thoughts about Policy Issues: Effects on Content and Quantity" (2005) 26 *Pol Psych* 929–948.

47 D Chong & JN Druckman, "Framing Theory" (2007) 10 *Annual Rev of Pol Sci* 103–126.

48 ML Cook, "The Advocate's Dilemma: Framing Migrant Rights in National Settings" (2010) 4 *Stud in Soc Justice* 145–164.

49 S Nicholson & D Chong, "Jumping on the Human Rights Bandwagon: How Rights-based Linkages Can Refocus Climate Politics" (2011) 11 *Global Env Pol* 121–136.

50 S Nicholson & D Chong, "Jumping on the Human Rights Bandwagon: How Rights-based Linkages Can Refocus Climate Politics" (2011) 11 *Global Env Pol* 121–136.

51 JP Winter & CH Eyal, "Agenda Setting for the Civil Rights Issue" (1981) 45 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 376–383.

52 A Downs, "Up and Down with Ecology – The 'Issue Attention Cycle'" (1972) 28 *Public Interest* 38–50.

53 S Hilgartner & CL Bosk, "The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model" (1988) 94 *American J of Soc* 53–78.

influenced the ways in which issues can emerge and become topical.⁵⁴ As multiple actors, their issues and frames compete for attention, power relations in the issue arena are sustained and re-examined.

In human rights issue arenas, multiple actors with different information and expertise battle to change policies, making agenda-setting challenging in an international context.⁵⁵ Framing by multiple actors can be successful, not only in reaching public groups on human rights issues,⁵⁶ but also in influencing power relations.⁵⁶ Without the power and credibility it brings, actors cannot persuade others to perceive new frames and issues as salient. For the most part, only powerful gatekeepers can influence the debate in issue arenas. Thus, it is essential to examine how and which actors participate in an issue arena and the power relations that subsist between them.

The situation of having many NGOs working in the same issue arenas creates competition between the actors over power and position. Human rights NGOs see the network, themselves and other actors differently, according to their own position in the network.⁵⁷ Selectivity is a part of power relations and thus part of the debates on human rights issues. Power positions can influence which issues are promoted and with whom actors co-operate. Powerful human rights actors are selective in their operations and framing, and well-established, often northern, NGOs, are selective in choosing their southern partners.⁵⁸

Human rights networks consist primarily of a few key actors with whom newer NGOs try to link themselves.⁵⁹ An established NGO may co-operate with a new one which shares its own agenda, or generates some benefit such as grassroots participation for successful campaign outcomes.⁶⁰ Pallas, Fletcher and Han state that if human rights NGOs and their actions were wholly based on morals and unselfishness, they would consistently

54 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 *Corporate Communications*, an Int J 293–310;

Meriläinen & Vos, "Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights" (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

55 V Haufler, "Governing Corporations in Zones of Conflict: Issues, Actors, and Institutions", in D Avant & M Finnemore (eds), *Who Governs the Globe?* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP 2010), 102–130.

56 Meriläinen & Vos, "Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights" (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

57 DR Davis & Amanda Murdie, "Looking in the Mirror: Comparing INGO Networks Across Issue Arenas"

<https://courses.cit.cornell.edu/patel/psac/Davis_PSAC_3_9.pdf> Accessed 17 August 2012.

58 C Fleay, "Transnational Activism, Amnesty International and Human Rights in China: The Implications of Consistent Civil and Political Rights Framing" (2011) 16 *Int J of Human Rights* 915–930; CL Pallas & J Urpelainen, "Mission and Interests: The Strategic Formation and Function of North-South NGO Campaigns" (2013) 19 *Global Governance: A Rev of Multilateralism & Int Orgs* 401–423, 405.

59 DR Davis & Amanda Murdie, "Looking in the Mirror: Comparing INGO Networks Across Issue

Arenas" <https://courses.cit.cornell.edu/patel/psac/Davis_PSAC_3_9.pdf> Accessed 17 August 2012.

60 CL Pallas & J Urpelainen, "Mission and Interests: The Strategic Formation and Function of North-South NGO Campaigns" (2013) 19 *Global Governance: A Rev of Multilateralism & Int Orgs* 401–423,

go after the worst human rights offenders.⁶¹ This is not always the case, however.

Anderson and others state that rather than serving as a means for the grassroots movements or the people, NGOs are a vehicle for international elites to talk to other international elites about topics – frequently of undeniably critical importance – about which they care.⁶²

Competition may lead human rights NGOs to choose their priorities based on factors other than human rights alone. Equally important is the notion that NGOs select their campaigns based on a cost-benefit analysis. NGOs estimate and select the possible targets of their advocacy campaigns “on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis, in which NGOs weight the hoped-for level of change in the target’s behavior against the resources necessary to undertake attacks on the target”, which supports Semb’s suggestion that states selectively adopt human rights conventions.⁶³ This manner of selecting issues and frames may seem brutal, but it is a reality in campaigns by human rights NGOs. A cost-benefit analysis follows the same pattern of zero-sum campaigning, where some issues are promoted and others left without attention, though they may be picked up and brought into issue arenas by other actors.⁶⁴

Debate does not take place without the strategic planning of frames and goals. Actors need intentional framing in issue arenas in order to succeed in their goals. For there to be debate and resolutions on human rights matters, issues need to be framed as salient. Human rights NGOs determine which issues to advocate by assessing multiple factors. Similarly, they assess their position in the network, e.g. by estimating the economic realities of organisational functions, such as amount of staff and financial resources. If this is the case, we need to examine how framing is used in the context of human rights issues and how this affects the relationships between the actors in the human rights debate.

61 CL Pallas, K Fletcher & B Han “How Do Campaigners Choose Their Targets? Exploring Cost-Benefit Analysis among Nongovernmental Organizations” (2012) Presented at International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, April 1–4.

62 See K Anderson, “The Ottawa Convention Banning Landmines, the Role of International Nongovernmental Organizations and the Idea of International Civil Society” (2000) 11 *Eur J of Int Law* 91–120; DR Davis & Amanda Murdie, “Looking in the Mirror: Comparing INGO Networks Across Issue Arenas” <https://courses.cit.cornell.edu/patel/psac/Davis_PSAC_3_9.pdf> Accessed 17 August 2012; CL Pallas, K Fletcher & B Han “How Do Campaigners Choose Their Targets? Exploring Cost-Benefit Analysis among Nongovernmental Organizations” (2012) Presented at International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, April 1–4.

63 CL Pallas, K Fletcher & B Han “How Do Campaigners Choose Their Targets? Exploring Cost-Benefit Analysis among Nongovernmental Organizations” (2012) Presented at International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, April 1–4, 12; AJ Semb, “Why (not) Commit? Norway, Sweden and Finland and the ILO Convention 169” (2012) 30 *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 122–146.

64 See J-H Zhu, “Issue Competition and Attention Distraction: A Zero-Sum Theory of Agenda-Setting” (1992) 69 *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 825–836; CR Carpenter, “Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks” (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120; Meriläinen & Vos, “Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights” (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

Analysis

To investigate how the existing gatekeepers respond to a new actor in the human rights network, a case study was conducted online in which the response of two gatekeeper NGOs towards a newer NGO was monitored. The focus was on analysing the possible responses by Amnesty and HRW to IC and its Kony 2012 campaign and, in particular, whether the campaign affected the prevailing power relations in the human rights network. The analysis was carried out by looking at the framing done by the two gatekeepers. Following the previous theorising on gatekeepers,⁶⁵ it is presumed that NGOs operate in networks with gatekeepers and less central actors. The study focused on the responses the IC's campaign received from two well-established human rights NGOs, Amnesty and HRW, who were chosen to represent the gatekeepers in this analysis. The responses were monitored by looking at the news sections of websites operated by Amnesty and HRW. Both NGOs utilise a multi-channel strategy to connect internationally with large audiences, communicating about issues via social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter that, in turn, link to their main website for more detailed information consistent with the social media content.⁶⁶

The search was conducted in the News sections of amnesty.org and hrw.org using the search bar and the following keywords: Kony 2012, Joseph Kony, LRA (Lord's Resistance Army), Uganda and Invisible Children. The analysis was limited to posts on the main websites, although posts also appeared in Amnesty and HRW blogs or their other social media pages. As multiplatform strategies are commonly used, identical posts can occur in several places. Where the same text occurred more than once in the sample, it was counted as one post. The posts on the main websites comprised statements, news stories and research reports with long narratives illustrated by photographs and video testimony, and with additional links.

The timeframe for the monitoring was 18 weeks, commencing with the release of the Kony 2012 video on 5 March 2012, and ending on 9 July 2012. This allowed observation of the first reactions of the human rights NGOs and of possible changes in power relations in the weeks following the launch of the campaign by IC. Only posts found on the websites that fitted into the timeframe were considered. The length of the monitoring period and the

65 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009); CR Carpenter, "Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

66 Meriläinen & Vos, "Framing Issues in the Public Debate: The Case of Human Rights" (2013) 18 *Corporate Communications: an Int J* 119–134.

subsequent analytical procedure were drawn from Winter and Eyal⁶⁷ who argued that social issues, such as human rights issues, only remain relevant for four to six weeks. In the present study, a monitoring period of 18 weeks was chosen to see if the issue investigated would remain salient longer than estimated by Winter and Eyal.⁶⁸ The monitoring period started at campaign launch so as to be able to analyse the responses it elicited from Amnesty and HRW, and how this affected power relations in the human rights network, if at all.

The results of the textual analysis, which are based on the data gained from the monitoring period, is presented. The course of the events is treated in chronological order. For Amnesty, the search produced 10 posts, 8 of them different, in texts that addressed issues related to the Kony 2012 campaign, such as Uganda, warlords and LRA or Joseph Kony, and 7 of which were made between 8 March and 24 May. Compared to Amnesty, HRW, with 16 related posts, 12 of which were made between 9 March and 20 April, was more active. Analysis of the 24 NGO responses was conducted by the researchers. First, each selected post was read carefully, to see if the keywords were present and the post fitted the timeframe. Secondly, for each post a summary of the text was written and included in a Word document, which served as a long data extraction table with the publication dates, titles, web links, and a summary of all the selected posts. The analysis of the responses focused on how framing was used by Amnesty and HRW, related issues or towards IC were discussed.

In the next section, we attempt to show how IC brought their agenda into the issue arena with the aim of becoming a more well-known actor in the network. The campaign centred on a 30-minute video, titled Kony 2012. Below, IC, the organisation, and the campaign itself, are first briefly introduced. Next, the responses of Amnesty and HRW are reported and, finally, conclusions are drawn.

Invisible Children and Kony 2012

Invisible Children (IC) is a US-based human rights NGO that became widely known through the Kony 2012 campaign. IC states that they are a group of storytellers,

67 JP Winter & CH Eyal, "Agenda Setting for the Civil Rights Issue" (1981) 45 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 376–383.

68 JP Winter & CH Eyal, "Agenda Setting for the Civil Rights Issue" (1981) 45 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 376–383.

visionaries, humanitarians, artists, and entrepreneurs, working both in Uganda and in the US.⁶⁹

On 5 March 2012, IC released the Kony 2012 video, emphasising the value of cyberactivism, that is, online activism. The video was 30 minutes long and viewable on YouTube and Vimeo, as well as via a link from social media sites like Facebook. The premise of the video was to inform the public about Uganda, the warlord Joseph Kony, and human rights violations practised by Kony's Lord's Resistant Army (LRA). IC wanted to help the youth of the country catch Joseph Kony and to raise interest in the cause. The tone of the video was energetic and filled with easy catchphrases. IC used value framing to give their agenda salience for, in particular, younger westerners, connecting them to the cause by oversimplifying the issue, leaving the viewer in no doubt as to who the hero and villain are. Naming and shaming framing was used in abundance to ensure that viewers would most likely side with IC. Furthermore, in the video IC framed themselves as credible do-gooders by co-opting the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, and incorporating an interview with its lead prosecutor. IC also called on youth to engage in the campaign by making donations and by contacting [American] decision-makers and celebrities to gain more publicity and political momentum for the cause. The video mostly showed young people, most likely to frame the topic to better relate to a young audience. According to IC, when confronted by demands for change being made by young people, decision-makers would have to take political action against Joseph Kony and LRA.

With the Kony 2012 campaign, Invisible Children was able to bring an issue into the centre of the issue arena. It became much discussed in social and traditional media. The campaign drew attention to an issue which was well known, violations by warlords, but had not been salient for some time. For many decades, little interest had been shown in the West regarding the conflict in Uganda. IC had helped raise awareness⁷⁰ even before the Kony 2012 video. However, with the Kony 2012 campaign, and by the emphasis throughout the video on both the person of Joseph Kony and the role of IC as a new energetic and youthful NGO, IC was clearly aiming to make both Joseph Kony and their own organisation well-known. While not a new departure in the human rights field, in its style of presentation and simplification the issue was different. Human rights NGOs see

69 IC, "Invisible Children" <<http://invisiblechildren.com/>> Accessed 6 September 2012. 70LL Burges, "Efforts at Peace: Building a United Uganda" (University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects) <http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1157> Accessed 17 August 2012.

70 LL Burges, "Efforts at Peace: Building a United Uganda" (University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects) <http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1157> Accessed 17 August 2012.

themselves as watchdogs for other actors and accordingly promote themselves when they promote an issue.⁷¹

In the present instance, within the space of a week, the frame chosen led to IC's campaign becoming one of the most topical human rights issues. In fact, the Kony 2012 campaign generated a massive public response. Within the first five days, the video was viewed over 55 million times⁷² and, by 12 July, the Kony 2012 video had been watched on YouTube 91,812,575 times. The campaign and IC were widely discussed online, and the story was frequently picked up internationally by traditional media outlets, such as CNN (USA), the BBC (UK), Reuters (UK), YLE (FIN), the Financial Times (UK), Helsingin Sanomat (FIN), and Der Spiegel (GER).⁷³ Due to the enormous popularity of the issue, Amnesty and HRW may have felt compelled to address it, despite it not being a top priority on their agendas. Their reactions lend support to Barzilai-Nahon's⁷⁴ argument that actors outside the central hub can influence gatekeeper actors by producing new information, and creating alternatives, thus gaining political power vis-à-vis the existing gatekeepers. In this case, there was also a media backlash: since the release of the video, criticism has been levelled at IC regarding its actions, agendas, operations and staff. However, at the time, the campaign attracted much attention, may have influenced the debate and power relations in the issue arena and, for a moment, seemed to be accumulating enough power to break into the central hub. This may also have forced the two established human rights NGOs to respond.

71 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 Corporate Communications, an Int J 293–310; D Davis, A Murdie & C Garnett Steinmetz, "Makers and Shapers": Human Rights INGOs and Public Opinion" (2012) 34 Human Rights Quarterly 199–224.

72 Conrad Quilty-Harper, "Kony 2012: Stats breakdown of the viral video" (The Telegraph, March 9 2012)

<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/joseph-kony/9134431/Kony-2012-Stats-breakdown-of-the-viral-video.html#>> Accessed 5 September 2012.

73 E.g. <http://edition.cnn.com/search/?query=invisible+children&x=0&y=0&primaryType=mixed&sortBy=relevance&intl=true#&sortBy=date>

e.g. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/search/news/?q=invisible%20children&video=on&audio=on&text=on>

e.g. <http://search.ft.com/search?queryText=Invisible+children> ; e.g. http://yle.fi/uutiset/maailman_lehdet/3348967

e.g. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/21/us-usakony-idUSBRE83K03A20120421>

e.g. <http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/Lapsisotilaiden+vapauttamista+vaativa+dokumentti+levi%C3%A4%C3%A4+verkossa/a1305557196325>

e.g. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/jagd-auf-rebellenchef-kony-aktivisten-starten-kampagne-gegen-den-schlaechter-von-uganda-a-820110.html>.

74 K Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control" (2008) 59 J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech 1493–1512.

The Responses

Just three days after the release of the Kony 2012 video, Amnesty and HRW responded to IC's campaign. The next section summarises and interprets their responses following a chronological timeline to see how the gatekeepers used framing and whether power relations changed over time. In Table 1, the dates and number of responses are presented.

Table 1. The Responses of Amnesty and HRW.

Amnesty		HRW	
Date	Number or responses	Date	Number of responses
8.3 ⁷⁵	1	9.3 ⁷⁶	2
13.3 ⁷⁷	1	12.3 ⁷⁸	1
14.3 ⁷⁹	1	14.3 ⁸⁰	2
18.4/ 19.4 ⁸¹	1 (same post)	15.3 ⁸²	1
23.5 ⁸³	1	21.3 ⁸⁴	1
24.5 ⁸⁵	1	23.3 ⁸⁶	1

75 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/efforts-arrest-joseph-kony-must-respect-human-rights-2012-03-08>

76 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/09/capturing-kony> ; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/09/how-catch-joseph-kony>

77 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/appeals-for-action/Support-UN-role-in-arresting-International-Criminal-Court-fugitives>

78 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/12/child-soldiers-worldwide>

79 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/landmark-icc-verdict-over-use-child-soldiers-2012-03-14>

80 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/14/icc-landmark-verdict-warning-rights-abusers> ; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/14/campaigning-action-joseph-kony-and-lra>

81 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR62/005/2012/en/56c3e218-514d-4e0e-97f4-128d56a864dc/afr620052012en.pdf>
<http://www.amnesty.org/zh-hant/node/30985>

82 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/15/justice-congo>

83 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/uganda/report-2012>

84 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/21/qa-joseph-kony-and-lords-resistance-army>

85 <http://amnesty.org/en/library/asset/POL10/024/2012/en/784820f2-5a3a-4dff-b7b4-b814033b5b9b/pol100242012en.pdf>
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/annual-report/2012/global-update>

29.6 /20.7 87	1 (same post)	4.4 ⁸⁸	1
1.7 89	1	20.4 ⁹⁰	3
n=	8	29.6 ⁹¹	1
		5.7 ⁹²	1
		9.7 ⁹³	2
		n=	16

Results of the Textual Analysis

Amnesty and HRW responded similarly to IC's agenda. Amnesty published many posts on its main website. Eight were counted as separate posts as they differed in textual content. Compared with Amnesty, HRW was more active with its 16 different online posts. Thus, altogether 24 posts were analysed.

As the first post on 8 March indicates, Amnesty recognised the effect of the Kony 2012 video, giving credit to IC as an issue raiser by stating that the video had generated a massive public response. Amnesty went on to say, however, that the solution to the problem was not for the American armed forces to intervene, as suggested by IC. Amnesty offered its own solutions: capturing Joseph Kony in accord with international law and bringing him to face justice at the ICC, while also including neighbouring African countries in the process. What Amnesty did from the very beginning was to emphasise, in

86 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/23/child-soldiers-worldwide-scourge>

87 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/activism-center>
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/international-justice>

88 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/04/other-half-kony-equation>

89 <http://amnesty.org/en/library/asset/NWS21/004/2012/en/c47306ab-3d23-4ff4-afd8-3eae61a079e6/nws210042012en.pdf>

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/after-10-years-time-leaders-champion-international-criminal-court-2012-07-01>

90 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/20/central-african-republic-lra-attacks-escalate> ; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/20/insecurity-mbomou-and-haut-mbomou-prefectures-car> ; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/20/call-solidarity-populations-central-africa>

91 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/06/29/icc-court-last-resort>

92 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/05/letter-foreign-ministers-19th-african-union-summit>

93 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/09/central-african-republic-lra-attack-near-hunting-reserve> ; <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/09/central-african-republic-letter-minister-justice-massacre-cawa-concession-mbomou-pre>

other words, frame, the results of its own years-long research on the topic. Amnesty claimed that although it is good to shine a spotlight on warlords through campaigns such as Kony 2012, other warlords should not be forgotten; they all need to be brought to justice to face charges for diverse crimes, not just the use of child soldiers. One week after the video's original release, neither IC nor the Kony 2012 video campaign was mentioned; Amnesty referred to IC and the video by saying "recent spotlight".

IC was at no time mentioned by Amnesty in news stories during the 18-week monitoring period; instead Amnesty used framing to credit its own research and central position in the human rights network. The only references to IC were in secondary statements, such as references to the Kony 2012 campaign. This testifies to the unwillingness of gatekeepers to link themselves to, and thereby legitimise, less credible actors such as IC and its different approach. Amnesty addressed warlords, the ICC, Joseph Kony and Central Africa, but mostly in the same posts or at least via links to each other. Amnesty also provided links to their own research on Uganda and other matters, as well as links to their social media sites, in line with the multiplatform tactics previously discussed by Meriläinen and Vos.⁹⁴

Unlike Amnesty, HRW provided a direct link to the Kony 2012 video on YouTube in its first post on 9 March. This shows that HRW did credit IC as an issue raiser. Much like Amnesty, HRW credited the video for providing much needed information about Kony and his crimes. Afterwards, however, HRW, like Amnesty, began to use framing to emphasise its own research, not only in Uganda but also in Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. HRW also mentioned how their results were taken directly to policy makers, such as President Obama, thereby framing their research as central to the political debate. Like Amnesty, HRW called for an international response and underlined the role of the ICC along with the UN peacekeepers. HRW did not identify IC as a human rights NGO, but instead called them "a group", while at the same time emphasising the flaws in IC's campaign, thus placing IC in a different position in the network.

Similarly to Amnesty, HRW appeared to use framing to take over the issue and credit themselves as a central actor in the case of Kony and related issues, rather than providing support for IC's campaign or welcoming the NGO, if not to the central hub as an equal member, then to the network. This supports the notion that gatekeepers act as guardians of the network and their own position in it, and do not willingly co-operate with actors they

94 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 Corporate Communications, an Int J 293–310.

do not consider credible. Like Amnesty, HRW also linked child soldiers and the warlord Kony with the ICC, and even published a news story on child soldiers worldwide one week after the release of the Kony 2012 video. HRW also, like Amnesty, provided multiple links to their own earlier documents, news and videos. Less than two weeks later, HRW again mentioned IC and the Kony 2012 video, crediting it for raising awareness. HRW stated that while its intentions were commendable and the video was a good first step, the campaign had faults. HRW called for next steps, such as policy changes after the fact rather than just clicking an online “Like” button. Here we again see the trend towards giving IC credit for being an issue raiser, while at the same time emphasising the difference between IC and the work of HRW for real-world solutions.

In addition, just two weeks after the release of the Kony 2012 video, HRW did a Question & Answer piece about Joseph Kony and the issues related to him. In the Q&A, HRW credited IC, although without mentioning the NGO by name, and later on in the text claimed that the criticism directed at IC was valid. While providing links to their own research, HRW further emphasised that in-depth research was needed as background to influence policy makers. This highlighted, i.e. framed, its central role as a researcher. HRW positioned Joseph Kony and Uganda as only one of many issues needing attention. Moreover, in HRW’s letter writing posts that related to Joseph Kony, LRA or warlords and connected violations, IC was not cited as a legitimate actor.

What is interesting is that both Amnesty and HRW raised the human rights violations perpetrated by Ugandan government forces. Both gatekeepers stated that if a lasting solution were to be achieved, violations by government forces must also be investigated by the ICC, an issue that was absent from IC’s video.

The NGOs gave credit to other actors to varying degrees. During the 18-week monitoring period, HRW posted letters written by other civil society organisations. HRW did not sign all of these, but believed them to be powerful and thus shared them, while criticising IC at the same time. Amnesty, in turn, gave less credit to other actors, including IC. Unlike Amnesty, HRW did not emphasise its own role in the setting up of the ICC, but rather focused on the last ten years of the ICC’s activities, its achievements and failures, and future challenges.

The monitoring period supported the notion that HRW and Amnesty function as the gatekeepers in the human rights network. The gatekeepers gave credit to IC, but only as a less central actor, an issue raiser. Although issue raisers may be important and should be valued, in this case study IC was not credited as an equal member of the human rights

network. The reactions from Amnesty and HRW were surprisingly strong, supporting the gatekeeper theory. Amnesty and HRW operated as a central hub, taking control of the agenda and presenting their own framing of the issue to support their views and existing expertise.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study analysed the responses of two gatekeeper NGOs, Amnesty and HRW, to the online campaign Kony 2012 launched by IC, a newcomer NGO. It sought to find out what, if any, influence, IC's action had on the power relations in the network. In their earlier work, Bob and Carpenter⁹⁵ emphasised the role of gatekeepers in maintaining existing power relations in the network, while a more dynamic picture, in which nongatekeepers may be successful in influencing power relations, has been proposed by Barzilai-Nahon.⁹⁶

The results of the study support the gatekeeper theory, although noting the momentary power of a less central actor as an issue raiser shows the potential of social media, at least in the short term, to change the existing power relations. The gatekeepers reacted to IC and its Kony 2012 campaign by acknowledging the spotlighting of Kony and the popularity of the energetic campaign, but they did not welcome IC into the inner central hub or into the network. Instead, they framed IC and its efforts to catch Joseph Kony as lacking credibility and naïve, whilst framing their own decade-long work on the issue and themselves as more knowledgeable professionals in the human rights network who are able to create real-world solutions. The study shows that in a network not all the actors welcome each other; they may not share information or they may form bi-lateral relationships or alliances. Thus, not all actors equally share power or occupy the same position in the debate in an issue arena, and the network is, therefore, characterised by asymmetrical power relations.

The framing strategy of Amnesty and HWR seemed intended, first, to emphasise their own expertise and long-term work on the issues of Kony, the LRA, Central Africa,

95 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009); CR Carpenter, "Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

96 Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control" (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

child soldiers and prostitution in the area. Secondly, these frames were additionally strengthened by not mentioning IC by name and stressing the lack of real-world solutions in the Kony 2012 campaign. This could be termed expertise framing, indicating that IC was not welcome into the central hub to work on the issue of Kony and related human rights violations. Possibly its approach was not congruent with those of the two gatekeepers and may have been seen as not beneficial to the network in the long term. During the short period in which multiple frames and views were posted on how best to tackle human rights violations, the gatekeepers quickly made sure that their own frames would remain dominant by repeating them and emphasising their own expertise and long-term work on various human rights issues instead of more explicitly confronting the new player. In doing this, Amnesty and HRW accorded IC only limited credit and, by extension, power. The enormous response of both social and traditional media called for the two gatekeepers to react swiftly. This would support the central hub theory⁹⁷ and Pallas and Urpelainen's theory on how well-established actors choose frames and persuade other actors to share and support these frames.⁹⁸ In this case, the central hubs, Amnesty and HRW, strengthened the process by framing themselves as the authorities on the issue and stressing their own advocacy, expertise and organisational power.

This is not to say that well-established actors in the central hub are unwilling to share power. They may wish to avoid legitimising a new actor with a different approach and genuinely feel that their own research and advocacy work is more valuable, for example in educating other stakeholders such as decision-makers and members of the public.⁹⁹ In this way, well-established NGOs who act as gatekeepers tend to reinforce existing power structures in the human rights networks, which may reduce the chances that new issues and frames receive attention, fitting Carpenter's and Bob's¹⁰⁰ notion of gatekeepers seeking to remain gatekeepers. However, in this case, IC's use of social media made it, at least for a

97 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009); CR Carpenter, "Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120. CR Carpenter, "Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

98 CL Pallas & J Urpelainen, "Mission and Interests: The Strategic Formation and Function of North-South NGO Campaigns" (2013) 19 *Global Governance: A Rev of Multilateralism & Int Orgs* 401–423, 405.

99 JN Druckman, "On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?" (2001) 63 *J of Politics* 1041–1066, 1061.

100 C Bob, *The International Struggle for New Human Rights* (U of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights, 2009); CR Carpenter, "Setting the Advocacy Agenda: Theorizing Issue Emergence and Nonemergence in Transnational Advocacy Networks" (2007) 51 *Int Studies Quarterly* 99–120.

short while, successful in gaining attention, resonating with Barzilai-Nahon's¹⁰¹ views on less central actors being able to change power relations. However, this case indicates that for an actor to gain a position in the long term, successful use of social media is not enough. Other factors, such as how well the approach of the new actor fits the existing values in the network, are also important. Above all, this case shows that, for new actors, social media has the potential to lower the entry threshold into an arena. The results point to a need for a re-evaluation of the gatekeeper theory in light of the emergence of social media.

For a brief moment, the Kony 2012 campaign became a salient issue in the contemporary human rights debate. How was IC, despite being relatively unknown, able to do this? IC reframed an old issue and combined a lively video, in which the person of Kony was central, with multiplatform tactics on both social media sites and their own main website to draw attention, particularly of young people, to that issue.¹⁰² IC urged its publics to use online communication, together with demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns, to create change. IC framed getting involved as being easy. As stated by Pepper, many young people who watched the video wanted to learn more.¹⁰³ The massive online public response generated by Kony 2012 in turn caused the traditional media pick up the story. Although much was said in the original Kony 2012 video about IC, little information was offered about the work being done on the ground in Uganda. IC was successful in capitalising on its value frames to which its young audience responded strongly. However, IC did not offer detailed suggestions as to how the human rights violations of using child soldiers and prostitution might be tackled, but instead saw US military action against the LRA as the solution to solving human rights violations in Uganda and other African states, an option opposed by both Amnesty and HRW. Deployment of US military advisors in African states could mean that civilians would pay the price, as possible failure could lead to retaliation against them.¹⁰⁴ Burgess¹⁰⁵ also questioned whether western involvement

101 K Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control" (2008) 59 *J of American Society for Info Sci & Tech* 1493–1512.

102 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 *Corporate Communications, an Int J* 293–310.

103 S Pepper, "Invisible Children and the Cyberactivist Spectator" (2009) 6 *Nebula* 40–55.

104 See M Schomerus, "They Forgot What they Came For: Uganda's army in Sudan" (2012) 6 *J of Eastern African Studies* 124–153; RR Atkinson, P Lancaster, L Cakaj & G Lacaille, "Do No Harm: Assessing a Military Approach to the Lord's Resistance Army" (2012) 6 *J of Eastern African Studies* 371–382.

105 Burges, "Efforts at Peace: Building a United Uganda" (University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects)

<http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1157> Accessed 17 August 2012.

alone is the answer to Uganda's problems and proposed a multi-actor approach to tackle human rights violations in the area, including Uganda and neighbouring regions. In similar vein, Pallas, Fletcher and Han stated that "The Invisible Children's Kony 2012 campaign has spent millions of dollars exciting public interest in an issue that was already largely resolved, while current human rights abuses are ignored".¹⁰⁶ Moreover, according to Finnström, the Kony 2012 campaign was dangerous and simplified the Ugandan situation, and also dehistoricised reality.¹⁰⁷ By laying all the blame on Kony while disregarding the underlying problems of the war-torn continent, IC creates a false reality where issues and solutions are seen as black and white.

In this study, Amnesty and HRW acted as gatekeepers in the international human rights debate, and IC as a newer, less central actor. The results showed that all three human rights NGOs used value framing as well as naming and shaming framing, clearly labelling the good and bad guys. Based on the overwhelming public response to its Kony 2012 campaign, IC and its supporters may have believed that it had found the solution to the problem of catching Joseph Kony and stopping human rights violations in Uganda, while both Amnesty and HRW followed a different course, emphasising their own expertise on the matter. Although IC simplified the issue of child soldiers and war crimes connected to Joseph Kony and LRA, while not providing much of a real-world solution to human rights violations, IC was successful in bringing the issue to a worldwide audience by framing it as salient for a young audience familiar with online visuals, and thus easily reached by this online campaign. The findings indicate that although IC, by bringing a fresh perspective to issues connected to warlord Joseph Kony, was able to force the central hub also to address the campaign, the central human rights actors sought to retain their gatekeeping role and only shared power to a limited degree. It should also be noted that the issue remained salient for longer than the four to six weeks suggested by Winter and Eyal.¹⁰⁸ At the end of the 18-week monitoring period, the issue of Joseph Kony had almost completely faded from the news posts of the main websites, and IC was no longer visible in the issue arenas monitored, while human rights violations in Uganda were no closer to being solved.

106 CL Pallas, K Fletcher & B Han "How Do Campaigners Choose Their Targets? Exploring Cost-Benefit Analysis among Nongovernmental Organizations" (2012) Presented at International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, April 1-4, 2.

107 S Finnström, "'KONY 2012' and the Magic of International Relations" (2012) <<http://www.e-ir.info/2012/03/15/kony-2012-and-the-magic-of-international-relations/>> Accessed 16 August 2012.

108 JP Winter & CH Eyal, "Agenda Setting for the Civil Rights Issue" (1981) 45 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 376-383.

As explained in the theoretical section, framing is often designed to appeal to the values and beliefs of actors by emphasising certain aspects or attributes of an issue, in pursuit of making them salient. When actors choose to advocate a certain human rights issue by framing it in a particular way, some other issues are left without attention, as attention to issues can be considered a zero-sum game. Cost-benefit analyses by actors in issue arenas guide their strategies and interactions which, while targeted at contributing to solving societal problems, are at the same time also targeted at obtaining or maintaining power and a central position in the relevant networks.

The results of this study suggest that both Amnesty and HRW saw it as cost-beneficial to address the issue of Kony 2012, as the issue was regarded as salient on multiple issue arenas both in online and traditional media, while at the same time retaining their gatekeeper role.

Human rights NGOs investigate and report human rights violations domestically and internationally. They promote activism and influence decision-making. Due to the selective realities of issue arenas and their capacity, not all issues of current interest can be accorded the same amount of attention. Nevertheless, human rights issues need to be regarded as salient in order for debate to happen and decisions to be made. Much like IC, other human rights NGOs use framing to draw attention to certain human rights issues at a certain moment in time. They also use framing to maintain organisational power in human rights networks, as this case study illustrated. Framing is specific to the actor, arena, issue and time. IC was able to break into the human rights network by means of framing, but was met with media criticism and counter-framing by the two gatekeeper NGOs who did not deem the actor credible.

To summarise, this study started out on the theoretical premise that issue arena debate can be explained with reference to issue arenas and power relations, gatekeeper theory and framing. The actors involved in the issue arena debate on human rights issues operate in networks to find solutions to social problems and define policy and legislative norms both domestically and internationally. Aside from asserting control over the debate, the power of gatekeepers such as Amnesty and HRW may also be visible in terms of resources, such as funding and high quality research, as well as more educated and culturally knowledgeable staff. The relations in the network may change when a new actor, such as IC, introduces a new issue based on new information or, in this case, an old issue in a new way, with a new frame. If the issue receives sufficient attention in various media and among other actors, then the gatekeepers must address it. Outcomes can vary, from

accepting the new actor into the central hub, through accepting the issue with its frames, accepting the issue but in terms of the central hub's own frame, to discrediting the new actor by framing that actor negatively and emphasising the central hub's own activities with respect to the issue. In the social media era it is to be expected that power in networks can change relatively fast. New actors may introduce new issues and frames and may as a result become active actors in the network or even gatekeepers themselves, e.g. in a situation where attention shifts from one issue to another and the power structure is disrupted. Gatekeepers will then need to be active if they wish to maintain their position. However, for the human rights debate as such it may be a favourable to evaluate new input by potential future actors in the arena, as they may contribute fresh ideas to human rights issues and so make them salient.

Invisible Children was able to make an already known, but at that moment non-topical, issue salient once again by means of framing, but in the end it was overpowered by media criticism and re-framing by the actors in the central hub. The gatekeepers, Amnesty and HRW, reacted by taking over the issue and framing the new NGO as less credible. Both Amnesty and HRW emphasised their own work and expertise by using framing to give valuable meaning and credibility to the work and to themselves, rather than collaborating with IC. The results of this study demonstrate that human rights NGOs compete for positions inside the network. Although the issues they focus on are sensitive and their goals are based on moral philosophy, actors in the human rights network nevertheless calculate costs, benefits and losses in efforts to protect their positions, and hence new actors are not unconditionally welcomed into the issue arenas.

This study has some limitations. The study period, starting with the release of the Kony 2012 video and continuing for 18 weeks, was chosen to allow for observation of possible reframing during the campaign and the reactions to a new actor's agenda of the existing human rights gatekeepers. However, it is possible that long-lasting effects on the salience of the issue outside this period may also have occurred. Moreover, the reaction of the traditional media to the Kony 2012 campaign might also have had an influence on the responses by Amnesty and HRW, since agenda setting and framing by multiple actors is always connected.¹⁰⁹ Interference between frames and the transfer of issues between the traditional news media and online media may be addressed in later studies.

109 Meriläinen & Vos, "Human Rights Organizations and Online Agenda Setting" (2011) 16 Corporate Communications, an Int J 293–310.

IV

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HOW IT IS DISCUSSED IN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE ARENAS

by

Niina Meriläinen & Marita Vos, (in review)