

NGO's and the case of "KONY 2012": A critical narrative analysis

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Abstract

This thesis documents a critical narrative analysis of the discourse surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign and video as found in texts, documents, and artifacts stemming from NGO’s Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Invisible Children. A critical narrative analysis was done to better understand the areas of comparison and contrast between these NGO’s on the subject of “KONY 2012.” Texts, documents, and artifacts were examined in order to uncover these areas of comparison and contrast, and resulted in three themes: 1) online mobilization, 2) formal authority and discursive legitimacy, and 3) the solutions to the Joseph Kony/ LRA problem. Knowing this contributes to a better understanding of how mobilization has changed, and the formal authority and discursive legitimacy of NGO’s in the representation of issues and solutions.

Keywords

“KONY 2012,” Mobilization, Social Media, Interorganizational Conflict,

Non-governmental Organizations

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Introduction

“I wish Joseph Kony was famous” -

Michael Poffenberger, Executive Director of The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative

“Those are the words that sparked KONY 2012. The problem with bringing Joseph Kony to justice was that nobody knew who he was. Hitler was known. Osama Bin Laden was known. Joseph Kony wasn't known. We believed it was up to us to make him famous. If only the world knew about the atrocities Joseph Kony was guilty of, it would unite to stop him.”

(“Invisible Children - 2012 annual report,” 2013, p. 16)

Social movements, mobilization of people by interest groups, protest for various causes, and activism have been a part of societies for many years. Tarrow (2011) comments on the history of social movements stating:

In the last fifty year alone, the American Civil Rights movement, the peace, environmental and feminist movements, revolts against authoritarianism in both Europe and the Third World, and the rise of new Islamist movements have brought masses of people into the streets demanding change...Such confrontations go back to the dawn of history. But mounting, coordinating, and sustaining them against powerful opponents is the unique contribution of the social movement—an invention of the modern age and an accompaniment of the rise of the modern state. (p. 6)

Social movements have been a part of how societies voice and communicate their disapproval of the situations they find themselves in. It is in these social movements that individual citizens, groups, or organizations try to fight those who wish to control them. It is also in the communication of these various social movements that a larger discourse surrounding these

events can be seen. This communication also shapes the ways in which the organizations and issues are viewed by the public, as well as how they are viewed by other organizations.

Mobilization can be defined as efforts “to marshal (as resources) for action <*mobilize* support for a proposal>”(Mobilize [Def 2.], n.d.). And, just as their various causes have seen changes over time, the groups responsible for them have changed also. Fisher (1997) attributes changes in mobilization to an ever changing world affected by the “globalization of capitalism and power, and by the decline of the state,” which has fostered an environment where “nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have undertaken an enormously varied range of activities, including implementing grass-roots or sustainable development, promoting human rights and social justice, protesting environmental degradation, and pursuing many other objectives formerly ignored or left to governmental agencies” (p. 440). In a situation where governments are more focused on capitalist gains, a nation's citizens can be ignored. Where governments previously took on the role of ensuring initiatives such as development and the protection of human rights, their focus has shifted to focus on money and not the people. It is here that NGO's come into play, picking up where governments have left or never were. A cause which NGO's, according to Fisher (1997), have taken up. Non-governmental organizations have therefore become an important part of society, differing dependent on “geopolitical base...size, type of activity...and ideology or motivation” (Atack, 1999, p. 855). NGO's have been recognized as being capable of fostering participation and change (Fisher, 1997), and so the number of NGO's has increased on a global scale (Kamat, 2004). Non-governmental organizations are taking up causes over the globe, in large numbers, and in doing so have become a key player in bringing about change in various capacities such as human rights. Where in the past governmental agencies have taken up causes for their citizens, NGO's

have taken their place to ensure that the voices of those in need remain heard. This can be seen in the many different NGO causes and campaigns, as well as in the “KONY 2012” campaign put on by the Invisible Children NGO.

While it could be suggested that due to the numerous varying social movements and causes in need of support that there would be enough problems for NGO’s to combat, disagreement and competition continues to exist, as it does within many different fields between organizations. Interorganizational conflict is also present in the NGO domain as it exists in other fields. “Interorganizational conflict is between or among organizations” (Wall & Callister, 1995, p. 516). Wall and Callister (1995) state conflict to be “a process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party” (p. 517). Here, conflict lies in the impeding of one organizations aim or goal by another which is in conflict with it. In the case of NGO’s, power plays a large role in the ability to participate, and the way in which the individuals and other organizations view an NGO and their actions. NGO’s face not only a public which is critical of their actions but also the critique of other NGO’s of their actions.

NGO’s like other organizations, experience conflict with other NGO’s, and are dependent on different agencies, and many different factors to be successful. Similar to NGO’s, “in interorganizational relationships, power resides implicitly in the dependencies of organizations on one another” (Perry & Levine, 1976, p. 1187). Many NGO’s work with other organizations to complete various tasks and campaigns, as well as providing support for campaigns in various ways including positive communication of their actions. “Thus, it becomes important for the organization to judge the amount and sources of support that can be mobilized for its goals, and to arrive at a strategy for their mobilization” (Perry & Levine, 1976, p. 1187). A proper

understanding of these factors is key to the successful creation and implementation of a mobilization strategy for an NGO or other organization. Knowing where an organization stands within the field of other NGO's, and how much power they have within this field is key to the creation of a mobilization campaign. Also knowing which other NGO's are willing to offer support, or not, can boost or pull down an NGO's efforts and the success of a mobilization campaign. The greater the support from other NGO's the better the potential success of a campaign. Communication of an NGO's involvement and their campaigns is therefore key to positioning themselves, and can be a place for conflict between other NGOs.

Interorganizational conflict is evident in NGO's disagreements on how to solve the world's problems. "NGOs are [at times] unsure or divided about the degree of intervention they advocate in the global economy" (Edwards, Hulme & Wallace, 1999, p. 122). Edwards et al. (1999) also state that "NGOs are unlikely to agree on the details of how to confront globalization and issues of conflict and humanitarian action, still less on their implications for NGOs as organizations" (pp. 133-134). Solutions to the world's problems are a point of disagreement and interorganizational conflict among NGO's which can influence the way an NGO is viewed, and the communication surrounding it and its actions.

Interorganizational conflict surrounding solutions can be attributed in part to the need for funding. "The decreasing amount of funding and the increasing number of NGOs has meant that the 'development environment' has been volatile and resources have been (or at least have been perceived as being) scarce" (Yanacopulos, 2005, p. 97). Funding is key to NGOs as it not only finances projects, it helps to gain further exposure, and in doing so secures financial contributions in the future. "Much NGO advertising, media work and lobbying are driven by the need to gain a higher profile in the marketplace in order to ensure a continued flow of resources

from both the public and official donors” (Edwards et al., 1999, p. 131). This need for a better profile also drives NGOs to focus on issues which help attract a large audience. In this case, the bigger the issue, the better the coverage an NGO can expect to receive, the more donations the NGO can collect. Natsios (1995) states that:

Emergencies ha[ve] created the impression that NGOs are in the business of ambulance chasing as they appear on the scene in large numbers to provide assistance. This impression is somewhat accurate. To attract private contributions to run their programs, the NGOs must make use of news events and media coverage, which raise public awareness in a way that no paid advertisement could ever achieve. The more dramatic the event, the greater the media coverage, and the greater the ease of fundraising around it.

(p. 409)

Bad news is good news for NGO’s. It is in the pain and suffering of others that NGOs do their best business. Being the first at the scene can therefore be a big media boost for NGOs. In the case for this research, and the context of the “KONY 2012” campaign and video, the situation in Uganda, Joseph Kony, and the LRA atrocities are not considered breaking news. NGO Invisible Children therefore contradicts Natsios’s (1995) statement that NGO’s look for emergencies and are in the business of “ambulance chasing” (p. 409). Many campaigns stem from recent atrocities or natural disasters, where the “KONY 2012” campaign took a problem which was already ongoing, and made it front page news. This became a point of critique for the campaign as the video portrayed a situation not realistic of Uganda to date. Renewing public attention and communication of an ongoing problem therefore requires a good understanding of the current state of affairs.

Just as the organizations responsible for mobilization efforts have seen a shift towards more NGO based efforts, the ways in which mobilization efforts are communicated have changed as well (Banet-Weiser & Mukherjee, 2012). The Internet and social media applications are a part of our everyday lives, with social networking commonplace. New technologies and advances have brought new ways to engage and unite for social good, at a scale and speed never seen before. “Since the expansion of internet use, online communication has been increasingly recognized as a central instrument for protest mobilization” (Cristancho-Mantilla, 2010, p. 3). The Internet is becoming more and more engrained in the way the world works at all levels. Shirky (2011) states that “as the communications landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action” (p. 29). Reaching individuals using online communication for the purpose of mobilization is increasing. Yang (2009) points to the increased use of the Internet for protest stating:

More often, protest takes place online. The most common forms include online petitions, the hosting of campaign websites, and large-scale verbal protests. The most radical is perhaps the hacking of websites. These forms of contention may be found in blogs, Internet bulletin boards, online communities, and podcast and YouTube-type web sites. (p. 33)

The Internet is becoming a more used tool in mobilization and protest, taking the place of traditional petition signing on paper and protesting in masses physically present at one time and place. This is ever present in the case of the “KONY 2012” campaign.

Increasing adoption of the Internet, social networking sites and social media, make it no surprise that current calls to mobilize use this as a key tool in their communication of social

movement campaigns. The Invisible Children NGO wanted 2012 to be the year in which increase public awareness of the atrocities in Uganda created by Joseph Kony and the LRA would bring about change. Inspired by the words of Michael Poffenberger, executive director of *The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative* and advisory board member of Invisible Children, the Invisible Children set out to make Michael Poffenbergers words a reality. Using a viral video posted to popular video sharing sites *Vimeo* and *YouTube*, the video titled “KONY 2012,” set out to test the reach one video could receive if spread on the Internet, in turn make Kony famous, which would ultimately lead to his arrest. The video begins by stating “the next 27 minutes are an experiment. But in order for it to work, you have to pay attention” (“*KONY 2012*” [Video file]). It is in the watching of the video that viewers fully understand how making Kony famous is made possible. This is the goal of this campaign. In making Joseph Kony famous, Invisible Children hoped to put him on everyone’s agenda as someone who needs to be put in jail.

The increased use of the Internet for mobilization can be seen in the case of the “KONY 2012” campaign, and the disagreement, or interorganizational conflict, surrounding the issue is astoundingly clear. “*KONY 2012*,” a viral video spread on the Internet, increased awareness of Joseph Kony and the LRA, and the Invisible Children campaign was talked about on various social media platforms was astounding. The video was not without criticism from the public and other non-governmental organizations, the latter of which is the focus of this research. Agreement and conflict over this campaign, as with many NGO problem solutions, is not a thing which is agreed upon. The “KONY 2012” campaign, therefore offers an opportunity to approach the topic of mobilization from a different angle, one focused on the discourse created by other non-governmental organizations. “In the global North, transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) enjoy strong public reputations as neutral experts providing vital

information on pressing issues” (Ron, Ramos & Rodgers, 2005, p. 557). In addition, “often considered as an international conscience safeguarding the rights of the vulnerable, NGOs have frequently enjoyed uncritical acceptance” (Solway, 2009, p. 322). This is not the case for the Invisible Children NGO, and so points to the relevance of a study looking at current social movements, such as the “KONY 2012” campaign, as well as the NGO based discourse surrounding it. Considering that the campaign is currently ongoing, this research could offer timely insight. Mobilization for social change as it takes place on the Internet could offer new insights into online mobilization as well as increase in the understanding of mobilization as a whole. In addition, the disagreement surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign, as well as the disagreement on the use of the Internet for mobilization, further reflect a need for a better understanding of the communication of mobilization on the Internet.

Understanding mobilization outside of a political context, as it has traditionally been researched (Bekkers, Edwards, Moody & Beunders, 2011b; Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Gerodimos, 2008), and moving towards research with a focus on the discourse surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign, could explore factors that contributed to the reception of the “*KONY 2012*” video. Understanding the dynamics of the discourse surrounding this mobilization campaign could further expose areas of contrast and interorganizational conflict between other NGO’s with the Invisible Children charity. There are always individuals and organizations which question and critique the actions of a charity, especially if they are behind such a popular viral video. Skepticism from NGO’s as well as other organizations, and disagreement among NGO’s on the solutions to problems as Edwards et al. (1999) pointed out are ever present, and only further the disagreements. Understanding the interorganizational conflict at play with the “*KONY 2012*” video and campaign could attribute to a better understanding of mobilization as

the reception of the campaign contributes to its success. “By asking who has formal authority, who controls key resources, and who is able to manage legitimacy discursively, we can also identify various power dynamics” (Hardy & Phillips, 1998, p. 227). Knowing how organizations communicate and critique or support social activism can help to gain valuable insight that can be used for future mobilization efforts. By identifying major issues, tensions, and criticisms, a more holistic understanding of the “KONY 2012” campaign can be formed.

Research question

The aim of this research is to better understand the “KONY 2012” campaign and the discourse surrounding it in order to identify areas of comparison and contrast between the Invisible Children NGO and other NGO’s. The Invisible Children charity is a non-governmental organization, therefore this research focuses on NGOs, and analyses the discourse regarding the “*KONY 2012*” video and mobilization campaign as communicated by other NGOs, taking on the form of a critical narrative analysis. Noting the disagreements amongst NGO’s such as how to combat problems, as well as the level of intervention needed, as put forth by Edwards et al. (1999) it is assumed that communication regarding this issue will be both in agreement and disagreement with the “KONY 2012” campaign. An analysis of the discourse surrounding the KONY 2012 campaign as it communicated via non-governmental organizations is done in an effort to better understand how the campaign was received by the public and more specifically, other NGO’s. Noting that the “*KONY 2012*” video and campaign were aimed to mobilize support for the finding, arrest, and conviction of Joseph Kony, this research looks at how social media impacts mobilization today. This research, therefore, contributes to a better understanding of social movement campaigns on the Internet, activism, mobilization, and NGO communication

of mobilization campaigns, their involvement, and their opinions of the actions of other NGOs. It is therefore that the following question can be posed:

In what ways do non-governmental organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch compare and contrast in their discourse surrounding the social media mobilization campaign “KONY 2012” as put forth by the Invisible Children?

The structure of this paper will be as follows. First, a literature review was done in order to better understand the field of research regarding NGO’s and their conflict with one another, and mobilization on the Internet. Second, the method of critical narrative analysis is described and placed within the context of the “KONY 2012” campaign. In addition, the texts, documents and artifacts used for this research are described. Third, the analysis and findings describe the three major areas of comparison and contrast found between the NGO’s. Lastly, these findings are placed into context, and the relevance of this research is explained.

Literature Review

This section reviews literature on non-governmental organizations, interorganizational conflict, social movements, mobilization on the Internet, the use of social media in mobilization campaigns, as well as some of the issues surrounding online social movements in order to provide a framework on which this critical narrative analysis is based. An overview of what non-governmental organizations are, what they do, how they differ, and some critiques of non-governmental organizations are discussed first.

NGO’s, society, and interorganizational conflict

NGO’s have taken on various different roles in society, and “have emerged as a powerful force on the government and business landscape” (Schepers, 2006, p. 282). The United Nations specifies NGOs as “hav[ing] to be independent from government control, not seeking to

challenge governments either as a political party or by a narrow focus on human rights, non-profit-making and noncriminal” (Willetts, 2002, para. 1). Their size, location, and purpose varies, as does the definitions of the term NGO (Fisher, 1997; Willetts, 2002). Fisher (1997) notes the variation in the types of non-governmental organizations:

They include, but are not limited to, charitable, religious, research, human rights, and environmental organizations and range from loosely organized groups with a few unpaid staff members to organizations with multimillion dollar budgets employing hundreds. (p. 447)

Yet despite their varying types, sizes, and budgets, “NGOs are regarded as representing the interests of the people, to the greatest extent possible” (Kamat, 2004, p. 159) and can be considered as “savvy interest groups who maximize opportunities and scarce resources” (Ron et al., 2005, p. 558). NGO’s are the soapbox for many different issues effecting individuals worldwide of varying race, creed, color, and religion. This however can complicate matters as to who’s voice is heard the loudest.

In addition, “NGOs have become a global phenomenon, emerging with amazing alacrity in countries merely on the threshold of establishing democratic states” (Kamat, 2004, p. 156). These NGOs take up various different causes, and “form and function on the basis of ideals, be it environmentalism, human rights, or some local, national, or international cause” (Schepers, 2006, p. 285). NGO’s are the sounding board for many of the world’s problems, bringing much needed attention and awareness.

However, not all of the work done by NGO’s is considered to have a positive impact on society, and protect human rights, the goals of many NGO’s. Solway (2009) points to problems

associated with the increase in the number of NGO's, noting "cultural insensitivity; agendas set by Western government and/or corporate interests, and funding with concomitant lack of accountability...and the problem of self-perpetuation in which NGOs' activities and priorities become increasingly dictated by the need to secure funding" (p. 326). Atack (1999) notes disagreement with NGO activity stating "NGOs demand a right to participate in international forums, for example, without necessarily examining the moral basis of this claim, in terms of their own relationship to those they claim to represent" (p. 858). Taking up a cause requires more than a general interest in the situation. NGO's, while noble in their fight for various causes, "NGO actions and attitudes can also exacerbate conflict" (Anderson, 1999, p. 348). It is no wonder then that NGO's face harsh criticism. While solving the world's problems is a noble cause, NGO's face critical audiences in their approaches and solutions to societal issues. Not every solution is the right solution.

Non-governmental organizations, like other organizations, deal with issues of conflict and competition. Ron et al. (2005) note to competition surrounding funding to be fierce stating the world to be a "Darwinian marketplace where legions of desperate groups vie for scarce attention, sympathy, and money, forcing NGOs to engage in competitive, market-like behavior" (p. 558). However, the desire to gain funding is not the only major area of friction an NGO will experience. Like other organizations, NGO's work within an interorganizational field, based on the connectivity of organizations around various issues, and experience a struggle for power (Hardy & Phillips, 1998). "In interorganizational relationships, power resides implicitly in the dependencies of organizations on one another" (Perry & Levine, 1976, p. 1187). It is in the connections between organizations that power lies. Where one organization is dependent on another, a power relationship exists where one organization is at an advantage. Control over the

power contributes immensely to the success of an organization. If other organizations are dependent on you for various reasons, you have power over them, and so are more successful.

“Power’ has emerged as a pivotal concept in explaining the process by which certain organizational and institutional structures prevail over others” (Mumby & Stohl, 1991, p. 313). Hardy and Phillips (1998) simplify power within these domains to be: formal authority, the control of critical resources, and discursive legitimacy. Formal authority here is the recognition of the deciding power of an organization, for example the government (Hardy & Phillips, 1998). Control of critical resources boosts the power of any organization, more importantly so if resources are scarce. “When one organization or group relies on another for a critical resource, such as expertise, money, equipment, information, etc., the dependent organization is at a power disadvantage” (Hardy & Phillips, 1998, p. 219). Lastly, discursive legitimacy, or the recognition of an organization as being a legitimate speaker, attributes to the power of an organization “a struggle between different interest groups to create a meaning system in which certain views of the world are privileged over others. The dominant social group (or coalition of group) [with discursive legitimacy] is therefore that which is best able to create an ideological meaning system which serves its own interests” (Mumby & Stohl, 1991, p. 318). The power of an organization is therefore based on its formal authority, to control resources, and be a legitimate speaker. “The actors with greater access to authority, resources, and discursive legitimacy will have the best chance of success in influencing the domain” (Hardy & Phillips, 1998, p. 219). Control of these attributes of power enable an organization to influence those in their domain, and even have power over them.

This ability to control the attributes of power, formal authority, control of resources, and legitimacy as a speaker (Hardy & Phillips, 1998) therefore also contributes to an organizations

ability to participate and be a player within its field. “Individuals and organizations require sufficient power to demonstrate that they have a “legitimate” right to participate” (Hardy & Phillips, 1998, p. 220). Discussions on conflict reflect issues of power, and the right to speak. Dredge (2006) states that discussions on conflict usually focus on inclusion and exclusion, as is the case in many conflict situations, “and that power differentials play a part in who participates, how engagement takes place and what issues are identified and moved forward” (p. 563). Being a part of a domain does not give an organization the right to speak or have a voice that will be heard. Dominant organizations, those with the most power decide who will and will not be included. Hardy and Phillips (1998) point to this right to participate stating:

The identification and legitimation of stakeholders is not, then, determined by any objective “right” to participate, but is influenced by whether dominant stakeholders allow less powerful stakeholders to participate, which, in turn, is related to the former’s vested interests. Thus, collaboration is important for who is excluded as much as who is included. (p. 220)

So while organizations may have the right to participate within their interorganizational domain, they require the authority to do so, control of which is crucial for an organization. In the case of NGO’s, it could be speculated that the power also lies within a demonstration of a legitimate right to participate. This could, like other organizations, be done by having formal authority, control of resources, and discursive legitimacy. These attributes contribute to the success or failure of a campaign such as “KONY 2012.” Furthermore, the control of an organization as to who is included and who is excluded in participation influences other NGO’s and their survival. The Invisible Children NGO and the “KONY 2012” campaign’s success is partially rooted in the power the Invisible Children NGO has within the field of NGO’s.

Control of the power and discourse could also be linked to the communication of NGO actions, and how a campaign is received, or made sense of by the public or organizations within a domain. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) state that sensemaking is “an issue of language, talk, and communication” (p. 409). It is in the language, talk, and communication that evaluation and acceptance for actions is formed (Jørgensen, Jordan & Mitterhofer, 2012, p. 109). The ability to control the communication surrounding an NGO’s campaign is influential to the acceptance of an NGO’s decision. The more positive the communication, and the less negative communication, the better the chance of the acceptance of an NGO’s campaign. If an NGO can control the amount of negative press it receives, it could better the success of the campaign. Having the power within their domain to do so, further shapes the way in which publics make sense of NGO actions. While having the power to control the discourse surrounding an NGO’s campaign is influential, it is not as simple as the NGO with the power is the NGO whose campaign will be accepted by the public. Power over the discourse surrounding an NGO campaign can simply aid in its success, as negative or conflicting communication can be suppressed.

The following section discusses the role of the Internet in communication. Technology has changed over the years, and has had a large impact on the way individuals and organizations communicate with each other. The use of the Internet in communication has many different positive and negative attributes, some of which are also discussed in the following section.

The Internet and communication

The Internet and the development of technologies resulted in new means of communication and socialization. The Internet changed the ways in which people communicate, and in turn has directly impacted and changed societies worldwide. From email, to social media,

to the ability to text message over the Internet, the ease of communication on the Internet has changed how individuals communicate. Traditional mediums such as letter writing come with long wait times between sender and receiver. Email and text message are almost instantaneous in reception, and the Internet allows for this type of communication. Changes in communication mediums can be attributed to the development and adoption of new technologies such as the Internet. The rapid increase in users worldwide of the Internet over the years can be seen clearly in adoption rates of Internet use in the United States of America, for example. The United States of America saw an increase from 25 million in 1995 to 83 million in 1999 (DiMaggio et al., 2001, p. 308), and noted 245.2 million users in 2012 (Internet World Stats, 2013, para. 1).

Central to the use of the Internet and new technologies for communication and networking purposes is the desire to communicate with one another. The adoption of the Internet saw the creation of new ways in which to communicate. From this need came the development of social media, and social networking sites. The Internet has changed the ways in which people are connected to each other, as well as the ways in which peoples connections are viewed. “Facebook is now the largest social network site” says Harlow (2012, p. 227). “The social network has now passed 1.06 billion monthly active users. Of those, daily active users passed 618 million on average during December 2012 and the number monthly active mobile users hit 680 million” (Protalinski, 2013, para. 1). Online social networks such as Facebook, have allowed for people to be linked to each other on a world wide scale. This is different from the physical determinants of the past, something that Wellman and Gulia (1999) point out that organizers of mobilization have realized, and can use to their benefit.

Individuals are connected to others all over the world, and at a lower cost compared to traditional media, making mobilization easier (Bennett, Breunig & Givens, 2008; Fisher &

Boekkooi, 2010; Shirky, 2011; Vissers, Hooghe, Stolle & Mahéo, 2011). This is beneficial for social change movements as the organizations behind them, mostly non-governmental organizations and human rights groups, generally work within a limited budget (Carty, 2002).

Scholars further link these lowered costs to improved connection and inclusion of groups and individuals which traditional communication mediums previously ignored or were unable to reach. “Enthusiasts hail the Net’s potential for making connections without regard to race, creed, gender or geography” (Wellman & Gulia, 1999, p. 331). Everyone, everywhere has the potential opportunity for inclusion, different from the past. Furthermore, Ward, Gibson, and Lusoli (2003) state that:

There is potential to expand the number of participants and bring in traditionally excluded groups such as housebound people, those with childcare responsibilities and elderly people, all of whom have difficulties attending traditional political gatherings or voting. (p. 653)

Access to previously forgotten, ignored, or not included individuals has become possible with the Internet. People who have been overlooked in the past due to various reasons have now been given the opportunity to be included.

The Internet also allows for “communication [that] is no longer restricted to the exchange of words. Images and sounds have also become increasingly important” (Bekkers et al., 2011b, p. 1007). DiMaggio et al. (2001) state that it is because of the ability to combine communication of different types of content in one medium, that the Internet could be more influential than radio or television in bringing about and facilitating social change (p. 308). The use of different types of content also furthers the spread of information as they are no longer only text driven, and so are “effective way of getting illiterate people and young children who cannot yet read and write

involved in campaigns,” something critical to social movements today (Dawson, 2012, p. 332).

Villarreal, Ford and Gil (2001) further argue:

By providing for the easy transmittal of simple texts, as well as the means to combine and re-combine a range of media formats and social actors, it allows for an unprecedented distribution of knowledge and resources to virtually anywhere in the globe. (As cited in Dawson, 2012, p. 336)

The ways in which information is communicated has changed, gone is the era where communication was text-based. Communication has shifted to where pictures, and sounds play an important role. This only further increases the spread of information to those who may be illiterate, and to whom previous text based information was useless.

The following section outlines how mobilization has changed due to the Internet. In addition, an explanation of the role the Internet plays in current mobilization campaigns is offered in order to gain a better understanding of how mobilization on the Internet takes place.

Mobilization on the Internet

The expanded use of the Internet for communication has impacted many different formerly offline activities, which includes that of mobilization, protest, and social change movements. Stein (2009) points to the importance of social movements within society, as they can be seen as avenues for “leveraging the interests of civil society against elites and authorities” (p. 750). Traditional forms of protest such as sit-ins, protest, strike, picketing, rallying, marching, and petitions, have been supplemented or replaced by online versions. Sanford and Rose (2007), directly link the appearance of “e-participation” to the “rapid growth and acceptance of the Internet” (p. 407). E-activism, or activism on the Internet can take various forms including “cyberpetitions, virtual protests, virtual sit-ins, virtual blockades, gripe sites,

email bombs, web hacks, and computer viruses” among others (Rolfe, 2005, p. 66). The ability to participate is at your fingertips. “Collective action and social movement protest has become commonplace in our ‘demonstration-democracy’” (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002, p. 465).

Electronic participation is becoming an ever more present part of life today.

Traditionally, research on mobilization, protest, and social change has focused on politicians and political campaigns elections (Bekkers et al., 2011b; Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Gerodimos, 2008). While other forms of mobilization exist, the primary focus of mobilization research remained on political mobilization. Shah (2011) points to a lack of media coverage, and specifically negative media coverage, for individuals unawareness of global issues leading to protest and mobilization. This could contribute to a focus on mobilization in politics and a lack of research on mobilization in other contexts. Goldhaber (1997) states that “attention, at least the kind we care about, is an intrinsically scarce resource,” which could explain the lack of awareness of mobilization and protest in the media (para. 12). It could be speculated however, that the increase in use of the Internet and social media could lead to an increased awareness of protest and mobilization.

Fisher and Boekkooi (2010) look at technological advances as positive for current mobilizers, looking at the endless potential the Internet offers for mobilization efforts, which make it a tool with advantages for individuals and group. “As the communications landscape gets denser, more complex, and more participatory, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public speech, and an enhanced ability to undertake collective action” (Shirky, 2011, p. 29). Youmans and York (2012) further support this by stating that “information technologies have become indispensable to reformers, revolutionaries, and contemporary democracy movements. They serve as venues for the shared

expression of dissent, dissemination of information, and collective action” (p. 315). The Internet offers numerous possibilities to mobilizers, and should be taken advantage of (Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010; Youmans & York, 2012). Media mogul Rupert Murdoch (1993) went so far as to state that “advances in the technology of telecommunications have proved an unambiguous threat to totalitarian regimes everywhere” (as cited in Morozov, 2009, para. 2). Protesting and the mobilization for social movements has gone digital, and it is the technological developments that have driven the increase in online activism (Yang, 2009, p. 39). Diani (2000) stated that “‘computer mediated communication’ (CMC) may be expected to affect collective action by improving the effectiveness of communication and facilitating collective identity and solidarity” (p. 386). The computer is therefore a key attribute for the communication of social movements and collective action today.

Using the Internet as a tool for mobilization has many different benefits one of which is access. The Internet has brought a reach that is unrivaled (DiMaggio et al., 2001). “Welcome to contentious politics Internet-style, where the rules have changed and the ideas and tactics or protest diffuse quickly to the far ends of the globe” (Ayres, 1999, p. 133). No longer are physical borders a determinant of the reach of a message being communicated, nor the amount of people one can communicate with “making transnational social movements and large-scale protest possible” (Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010, p. 194). Wellman and Gulia (1999) state that organizers:

Realized that communities do not have to be solidary groups of densely-knit neighbors but could also exist as social networks of kin, friends, and workmates who do not necessarily live in the same neighborhoods. It is not that the world is a global village, but as McLuhan originally said, one’s “village” could span the globe. (p. 332)

The ability to mobilize others is no longer limited to proximity. Individuals can be mobilized regardless of their geographic location.

Social movements and mobilization rely heavily on the personal connections and associations of those involved (Haythornthwaite, 2005). The use of social networking sites and social media play into these platforms which are based upon the connectivity of individuals. Facebook “users have an average of 130 friends [and so] provide an easily and instantaneously accessible critical mass” (Harlow, 2012, p. 229). Bennett et al. (2008) link the success of the 2003 anti-war demonstrations to “the creation of large, personal level digital communication networks,” as their influence “can account for the scale and speed of mobilization” (p. 285).

The Internet has allowed individuals to show their affiliation with causes in ways different from traditional forms of social movements. Showing these affiliations is common place within social media and on social networking sites. Here, individuals are able to better show the causes they support to their personal networks. This in turn expands the exposure of any given cause. “Personalized communication in this context entails providing greater opportunities for individuals to define issues in their own terms and to network with others through social media” (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, p. 773). Haythornthwaite (2005) also points to the nature of the relations of individuals within social networking sites as being, at times, weakly linked, yet having breadth, linking individuals with “different experiences...access to different information, resources, and contacts” (p. 127). It is in these weak relations that social movement exposure thrives. Morozov (2009) points to the potential in the increase of Internet, social media, and social networking sites, to possibly sparking societal and democratic changes. “If nothing else, social media may color civic discourse in particular ways” (Howard & Parks, 2012, p. 361). Social media has also been seen as a tool that increased the speed and

interactivity possibilities unrivaled by traditional brochures, mail or telephone campaigns (Elantawy & Wiest, 2011, p. 1218). Social media has influenced communication in many different ways, yet its ability to spark democratic and societal change is yet to be seen.

The communication of social movements on the Internet has also allowed for organizations, groups, and individuals to bypass the traditional hierarchical control over media communicated messages. “Social movements can use the internet to bypass mainstream media gatekeepers or repressive governments and communicate directly with their constituencies and the broader public” (Stein, 2009, p. 750). The communication of messages outside of the control of traditional gatekeepers fills more than a need for increased awareness of issues ignored by traditional media. Stein (2009) states that due to the decreased control over the types of messages communicated via the Internet has created a more level playing ground. The Internet has given the power over communication to the social change organizations, who are now less restricted than before, and are now better able to control the communication of their messages. Poster (1995) states that this lack of control fosters societies which are more critical of the world around them and enables them to challenge ideas and traditional hierarchies:

When users have decentralized, distributed, direct control over when, what, why, and with whom they exchange information ...it seems to breed critical thinking, activism, democracy and equality...This electronically mediated communication can challenge systems of domination. (As cited in Carty, 2002, p. 133)

The communication of messages is in the control of the sender, and the Internet has allowed for the access to information and ideas which may have previously been limited. Increased access further fosters an environment where individuals have the opportunity to form and communicate

differing opinions, and in doing so can challenge control as a wide range of opinions are available.

The “KONY 2012” campaign and video is an example of micromobilization, a form of mobilization. Micromobilization makes use of individuals and smaller groups targeting other individuals (Bekkers, Beunders, Edwards & Moody, 2011a). In the case of the “KONY 2012” campaign, the sharing of the video by individuals, within their social networks, the form which micromobilization takes, brought “KONY 2012” to the attention of other individuals, who then shared it within their own networks, and so on. This, unlike macro- or meso- levels of mobilization, the more traditional forms, which target groups or organizations (Bekkers et al., 2011b; Gerhards & Rucht, 1992).

“KONY 2012” indicates that mobilization is shifting from the traditional forms such as protests or the signing of petitions, which can be considered macro- and meso- levels, to mobilization on a micro level, which Bekkers et al. (2011a) link to the Internet and new technologies. The use of the Internet worldwide help to make it a “potentially powerful tool for collecting and disseminating information, for building organizations, and for mobilizing for action” (Bekkers et al., 2011a, p. 209). Cooper (2003) notes the influence of media coverage in shaping perceptions and discourse, which is the beginning of the mobilization process. Moving media coverage of mobilization to social networks on the Internet also shapes perceptions and discourse, and the ability for micromobilization to occur. This is no more clear than in the case of “KONY 2012,” where the discourse within social networks provided a platform for the organization of actual mobilization. Yet, while the Internet has much to offer the social activist of today, the impact and full potential on mobilization efforts are unknown (Vissers et al., 2011).

The success of a mobilization effort is dependent of many factors, and the discourse surrounding these issues only further blurs how these issues are viewed.

Having discussed non-governmental organizations, the role of the Internet in communication, how the Internet has changed mobilization and social movements, the following section is a critique on mobilization on the Internet. Not all scholars agree that eparticipation, or social media mobilization, will bring about the much desired social change.

Problems with online mobilization

Considering the ability for a social change message of any form to reach different types of individuals worldwide, bypassing traditional gatekeepers, at a low cost, makes one believe that social change is more possible, more influential, and more important than ever before. The Internet has changed the ways in which social movement campaigns and activism take shape, as well as the ways in which they are communicated (Carty, 2002; Fisher & Boekkooi, 2010; Wellman & Gulia, 1999). No longer limited by borders, the Internet has been lauded for allowing campaigns to go global. However, debate remains on the use of the Internet having a negative effect on the goals of a social movement campaign.

Participation in mobilization and social movements on the Internet requires little effort, and little risk is involved. It is here in the amount of effort required, and the threshold of participation which influences the success or failure of mobilization efforts (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). The ease with which individuals are being exposed to messages, is also the ease to which they remove these messages from view (Vissers et al., 2011). This can be further attributed to “attention scarcity,” where the amount of information overtakes the amount of time needed to process it, making the attention an individual can give scarce (DiMaggio et al., 2001, p. 313). “Individuals tend to be aware of the most popular cultural artifacts and to monitor the

latest hot programs and motion pictures” (DiMaggio et al., 2001, p. 321), competition for attention is high. Ward et al. (2003) state that the Internet does little to increase the interest of those who were not already linked to a cause, seeing as the Internet is considered to be a pull technology, where a web page does not appear unless requested, and so “websites could be seen as preaching to the already politically converted” (p. 654). Participation, therefore, is influenced by numerous factors.

The use of the Internet and social media applications seem endless, and so can be very useful to online social movements. While these technologies “not only supported traditional offline social movement actions such as the classical street demonstrations and made them more transnational, but is also set up new forms of online protest activities and to create online modes of existing offline protest actions” (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010, p. 1147). However, the potential of the Internet to mobilize has been linked by scholars to overcoming the digital divide, the level to which effort is required, as well as the threshold of participation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2011; Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010). Worldwide, the access to resources as well as the skills required to make use of these technologies and resources remain unequal (Stein, 2009). Ward et al. (2003) point to a divide:

Internet optimists argue that the technology can widen political participation, bring new people into the political process, increase the range of protests and participatory opportunities, and foster the creation of new political networks and virtual communities, thus deepening the quality of participation and facilitating a more vibrant pluralist democracy. On the other hand, skeptics suggest that the Internet is unlikely to alter participation very much and, if it does, it is likely to be for the worse, exacerbating social

divides, eroding collective political action and creating a shallow populist style of democracy. (p. 657)

While the Internet may seem to be able to include everyone, this inclusion is based on the ability to use the technology and resources, and yet may not be as inclusive as it seems. It may only prove to continue to reflect the inequalities it hopes to dismiss. Online mobilization is thus possible only for those with access and the ability to use technology.

Bennett and Segerberg (2011) however, state that this personalization of mobilization messages may take the new emphasis on the individual to do their part, in place of the organization who traditionally took the responsibility, and “complicate protest coordination to the extent that it makes turnout weak and unpredictable and more difficult to convey as a unified act of commitment?” (p. 775). In addition, Ward et al. (2003) “question whether strong ties can really develop online, seeing surfing the Internet as a solitary and individual activity that is unlikely to foster collective action or increase the levels of personal trust required for direct action politics” (p. 655). Brunsting and Postmes (2002) point to the obvious contradiction between social mobilization on the Internet, questioning how the Internet “a socially isolating medium can reinforce social unity” (p. 528).

While the use of one’s network can have an impact on the number of times a message is communicated and the amount of individuals to which a message can be communicated, the Internet is used by many as an arena for sharing ideas anonymously, making use of a smaller network. “Many bloggers and activist social media users particularly seek anonymity as a mean of protection from retaliation,” and “allowing anonymity in social action is arguably essential for the protection of basic rights such as liberty, dignity, and privacy” (Youmans & York, 2012, p.

319). Keeping messages within these smaller arenas effects the rate and reach, however the right to one's opinion is the backbone of many societies.

Online forms of protest such as the sharing of a Facebook page, online video, or the signing of a digital petition taking the place of physical activities and the setting of a signature on paper is not seen by all as a positive change. "Internet activities have been criticized for being 'slacktivism', where the real life impact of the activities is limited; the main effect is to enhance the feel-good factor for participants" (Christensen, 2011, para. 1). Lee and Hsieh (2013) define 'slacktivism' to be "low-risk, low-cost activity via social media whose purpose is to raise awareness, produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity" (p. 1). Where participation is driven purely for the good conscience of the participant regardless of the goal or the outcome of the campaign, failure is inevitable. According to Ward et al. (2003), "sitting in front of a computer screen is not the same as taking part in a live demonstration or protest. Nor is it likely to inspire people to further action in the same way as face-to-face protest" (pp. 655-656). Christensen (2011), goes on to say that "wearing badges is not enough, and neither is changing your profile picture on your Facebook account for a day, a week, or a month. The 'slacktivists' are seen as unwilling to get their hands dirty and do the efforts required to actually achieve these goals" (para. 27). However, many point to the fact that they at least are doing something, where others do nothing. Endo (2012) disagrees, stating that this type of argument is based on the reasoning that something is better than nothing. He continues "the only thing worse than doing nothing is doing the wrong thing without taking into account how difficult and complex it is to affect real change in other countries" (para.10). Social change movements, following Endo's (2012) line of reasoning, need to consider the situations and history of the problems which they are trying to solve.

While ‘clicktivism’ has been used negatively, not all are in agreement that it is the product of negative behavior and so has only negative outcomes. Bailyn (2012) points to the positive potential of ‘clicktivism’ in relation to social change, stating that “as social media becomes more integral to our lives, the proportion of people performing ‘small’ actions, like sharing a video or status update, or donating \$5 through PayPal, will increase. But that’s a good thing” (para. 8) Bailyn (2012) sees these small actions as a good thing as doing this is better than doing nothing, the line of argumentation that Endo (2012) would disagree with that donating money, or increasing awareness of a situation does not directly bring about the much needed change social movements are aiming for. Lee and Hsieh (2013) also point to the benefit of ‘slacktivism’ on collective action as it has been able to increase awareness, such as in the case of “KONY 2012”, or raise much needed funds for natural disaster victims, at rates never seen before (p. 2).

While the form of activism may have changed to ‘slacktivism’ or ‘clicktivism’, harnessing the potential that this has to offer may be the key to the future success of social movement campaigns online. These new technologies, and web 2.0 platforms help to increase the visibility of these campaigns as well as make them more accessible. “Social media’s power lies in its vast reach, and using it we will soon be able to accomplish more with a few mouse clicks than was possible with a small army a hundred years ago” (Bailyn, 2012, para. 11). Kahn and Kellner (2004) further point to the change in the abilities of what they call ‘dumb mobs’ into ‘smart mobs’ “linked by notebook computers, personal digital assistant (PDA) devices, internet cellphones, pagers, and global positioning systems (GPS)” (p. 89). However, the use of the Internet for building connections, and bringing about social change, is not fully accepted by all scholars. While the Internet is “stimulating connections and forging new links at all levels of

organization – grassroots, corporate, institutional, national, global – and a concern that such connectivity may detract from local interaction” (Haythornthwaite, 2005, p. 125). Individuals are being exposed to situations of social change on a global scale, and in turn could be ignoring or overlooking what is happening in their own backyard. While ‘dumb mobs’ have become ‘smart mobs’, connection on a global scale will do little good if those trying to help each other ignore the help they themselves at times need.

Overall, there is disagreement between scholars on the use of the Internet for social movement mobilization as a viable alternative to offline protest.. This disagreement does not only lie in the potential uses and opportunities that the Internet provides for social movements, but in the ability of the Internet in bringing about the same level of change seen offline. “Online activism could become a low-cost but also low-effective substitute for off-line protest” state Della Porta and Mosca (2005, p. 167).

Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl (2005) among others, question whether social change movements which rely on the Internet and other technologies are equally or more successful than their traditional counterparts. “Regime change by text messaging may seem realistic in cyberspace, but no dictators have been toppled via *Second Life*, and no real elections have been won there either” (Morozov, 2009, para. 11). McCafferty (2011) points to the obvious goal of all social movements when he said “in the end, activism has always been—and will always be—about people. Specifically, people who show up in person” (p. 18).

Methodology

In order to better understand the discourse surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign as put forth by the Invisible Children NGO, this research takes the form of a critical narrative analysis. As previously stated the research question posed:

In what ways do non-governmental organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch compare and contrast in their discourse surrounding the social media mobilization campaign “KONY 2012” as put forth by the Invisible Children?

A better understanding of the discourse surrounding this issue can be seen in a closer analysis of the content put forth surrounding the issue by other non-governmental organizations. Considering the controversy that this issue created in public discourse communicated via social networking sites as seen by this researcher, it is assumed that disagreement will exist in the communication of documents relating to the “KONY 2012” campaign and video from other NGOs.

Understanding how “KONY 2012” came to be, and the discourse surrounding it, requires an understanding of its context. The following section gives a brief explanation of the situation surrounding Joseph Kony and the LRA.

“KONY 2012” in context

Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army, a guerrilla group in Uganda, has been accused of “abducting, killing, and displacing civilians in East and Central Africa since 1987” (“*About,*” n.d., n.p.), of being the “world’s worst war criminal” (“*Kony 2012: Year in review – results,*” 2013, n.p.), displacing over 2 million people, and of “direct[ing] the abduction of 60,000, including 30,000 children, forcing them to fight in his campaign of murder, rape, mutilation and sexual slavery” (Forbes, 2011, para. 1). He has managed to stay on the original Forbes Most Wanted list, evading capture and death (Forbes, 2011). Kony has a warrant for his arrest, issued by the International Criminal Court, on 33 charges, which include war crimes and crimes against humanity (Vardi, 2012).

The Invisible Children NGO produced a video titled “*KONY 2012*” explaining the situation regarding Joseph Kony, and based a social change campaign around it. The aim of the video was to gain as much exposure as possible in order to bring about change and lead to the arrest and conviction of Joseph Kony within the year 2012. The video proved successful in rate of dispersal, and reach, with 100 million views worldwide in 6 days, despite not achieving its ultimate goal of the capture and conviction of Joseph Kony within the year. This made it the “fastest growing viral video in history,” and was one of the most talked about issues in society leading to a pledge of support from 3.7 million people from 185 different countries, 3.1 million likes on Facebook made it the most liked non-profit, and saw a 1,200 per minute peak tweet rate for #STOPKONY (“*Kony 2012: Year in review – results*,” 2013, n.p.). Watson (2012) comments on the video stating:

Mission accomplished...[it] has been the single most shared piece of media on Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit over the past couple of days. If the wired world didn’t know Joseph Kony last weekend, it does now. (para. 2)

In the end, the video showed that the Internet could play a large role in the rate and reach of a video on a world wide scale. Kony, a person relatively unknown to the world, became a well-recognized person, and the subject of discussion all over the globe.

Despite the success of the *KONY 2012* viral video, there are still some, including other NGO’s, who criticize the campaign, calling it a failure in online mobilization, irresponsible, and a possible motivator for increased violence (Branch, 2012; Carroll, 2012; Waldorf, 2012). “Have they thought of the consequences? Making Kony ‘famous’ could make him stronger. Arguing for more US troops could make him scared, and make him abduct more children, or go on the offensive” (Pflanz, 2012, para. 10). Criticism include an over simplification of the

problems in Uganda and Africa in general (Wing Kosner, 2012b), as well as of telling a story which is no longer totally true. Michael Wilkerson, a freelance reporter in Uganda, pointed to the fact that Joseph Kony is no longer in Uganda, having left the country some 6 years previously, and that the Lord's Resistance Army is no longer as large, now only a few hundred soldiers, questioning ultimately how misinformed masses could possibly hope to solve such a complicated issue (Watson, 2012). It could be speculated that it is for these various reasons that the Invisible Children organization choose to label the "*KONY 2012*" video an experiment in speed of online video sharing ("*Kony 2012: Year in review – results*," 2013, n.p.), and not a campaign to create awareness and the hunt Joseph Kony expedition it could lead viewers to believe.

The Invisible Children charity states their campaign goal to be "mobiliz[ing] massive groups of people to support and advance international efforts to end LRA atrocities" ("*About*," n.d., n.p.). Using the Internet and social media platforms, the campaign, and more specifically the video, targeted individuals and pushed them to reach out to their networks in an effort increase the reach of the campaign. Befitting their goal for the 2012 year, the video further targeted 20 celebrities or what they call "culture makers" including Oprah, Mark Zuckerberg, George Clooney, Lady Gaga, Bill Gates, Rick Warren, and Bono—and 12 politicians or "policy makers" including Stephen Harper, Condoleezza Rice, John Kerry, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. The Invisible Children made good use of well recognized individuals as faces for their campaigns, recognizing the power these individuals have in getting public attention (Preston & Goodman, 2012). However, it is not only the individual targeting, the use of social networking sites or celebrity spokespeople that helped popularize the "*KONY 2012*" video, "the Kony 2012 video invites viewers to act immediately by sharing the video, signing a pledge, contacting

policymakers and celebrities, and ordering the ‘action kit.’ All it takes are a few clicks” (Waldorf, 2012, p. 472). Activism in the case of “KONY 2012” as Waldorf (2012) describes it seems quite simple. “Feature by feature, from the like counter to the new timeline, KONY 2012 shows how Facebook can be used to engineer social change” (Wing Kosner, 2012a, para. 5). Social media and the use of one’s social network was beneficial to the “KONY 2012” campaign.

However, while mobilization has taken on new forms, not all of which scholars deem as positive. The days and months following the March 5, 2012 release of the “*KONY 2012*” video sparked much debate of the issue, and was evident on many different social media channels. It is the amount of social media coverage seen by this researcher, in the beginning months of 2012, which sparked the interest for this research. The “KONY 2012” campaign received large amounts of attention on social networking sites such as Facebook. It is here where this researcher was first exposed to the “KONY 2012” campaign as well as the Invisible Children NGO. Noting the divide within my network of those supportive of the campaign and of those critical of the campaign clearly pointed out that there was disagreement with the campaign and the goal of the Invisible Children NGO. Noting this, an area for potential research was identified, and so sparked the beginnings of this research.

Critical narrative analysis

The approach of critical narrative analysis stems from critical discourse analysis which “focuses attention on discursive and rhetorical practices through which firms and activists attempt to legitimize or delegitimize contested issues, persuade other actors, and negotiate over (new) meanings for corporate responsibilities” (Joutsenvirta, 2011, p. 58). Rhetoric in this research is defined as “the human use of symbols to communicate...Every symbolic choice we make results in seeing the world in one way rather than in another, and in contrast to animals,

human experience is different because of the symbols we use to frame it” (Foss, 2004, p. 4). Rhetoric is used therefore as a means to create meaning and is not interpreted in the same way by each individual. This critical narrative analysis will follow that of a rhetorical criticism which “is a qualitative research method that is designed for the systematic investigation and explanation of symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (Foss, 2004, p. 6). This will create a better understanding not only of the rhetorical processes but also help in “explaining, investigating, and understanding symbols and our responses to them” (Foss, 2004, p. 7). In doing a critical narrative analysis, a better understanding of how the “KONY 2012” campaign was communicated can be created, as well as shed light on the interorganizational conflict which exists in this NGO domain. When NGO’s communicate regarding this campaign, reactions both comparable or in contrast to the Invisible Children will influence how this campaign is viewed, and so will impact the success of the campaign and the Invisible Children NGO.

There are many different types of rhetorical criticism, and this research will take on the form of a narrative criticism. Foss (2004) further defines the narrative stating that:

Narratives organize the stimuli of our experience so that we can make sense of the people, places events, and actions of our lives. They allow us to interpret reality because they help us decide what a particular experience ‘is about’ and how the various elements of our experience are connected. Narrative also play a critical role in decision making and policy making in our institutional lives. (p. 333)

“KONY 2012” received much media attention and so is an experience which requires deeper investigation. Understanding the role this event played in history, as well as what it is about and how the various NGO’s communicated it further contribute to an understanding of how it is

connected. Knowing how the story surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign developed, will create a better understanding of the event as a whole.

Narrative criticisms are further defined based on four dimensions (Foss, 2004). First, they must be “comprised of events that may be either active (expressing action) or stative (expressing a state or condition)” (p. 334). The “KONY 2012” campaign is one that expresses action, as it was a call to action or mobilization. Second, the “events in it are organized by time order” (p. 334). The “KONY 2012” campaign launched March 5, 2012, the date the video was released, however, it has no current end date. However, the rhetoric included in this research does follow a time order, starting from the date the video was released until the end of January 2013 due to time restrictions. Further research on this issue could include additional documents published after the January 2013 cut off. Thirdly, Foss (2004) states that the narrative criticism “must include some kind of causal or contributing relationship among events in a story” (p. 334). In the case of this research it is the “KONY 2012” campaign that sparked the discourse within NGO’s. Lastly, “it must be about a unified subject” (p. 334). For this research only documents relating to the “KONY 2012” campaign will be included.

It is in the identification of areas of comparison and contrast with the Invisible Children NGO’s portrayal of Joseph Kony, and the situation in Uganda that a better understanding of the “KONY 2012” campaign can be formed. Recognizing and identifying the various different NGO’s opinions on the situation only further impact how society views this issue. Joutsenvirta (2011) states that “discourses are not mere representations of social reality; they are linguistically mediated constructions which also formulate characteristics of social actors and sustain and reinforce ideologies. They are important means through which beliefs, norms, and values are reproduced and transformed in society” (p. 61). Knowing which areas or issues are supported

and which are denied or questioned by other NGO's could be therefore speculated as having an impact on the "KONY 2012" campaign as a whole. Wrage (as cited by Rosteck, 1998) further points to a need that texts need to be understood in not only the conditions of the creation of ideas but also the conditions of their reception. This is relevant in the case of this research as it is the condition of their reception which will create the focus of this study.

Following Marie Hochmuth Nichols statement that the researcher "must serve his [or her] society and himself [or herself] by revealing and evaluating the public speaker's interpretation of the world around him and the peculiar means of expressing that interpretation to his generation" (as cited by Jasinski, 2001, p. 250), this research will attempt to map the public's interpretation and discourse, that of NGOs, of the Invisible Children's "KONY 2012" campaign.

The approach of critical narrative analysis is appropriate for this research as it will allow for the identification of the areas of comparison and contrast in the discourse surrounding "KONY 2012." This aim follows Jousenvirta's (2011) explanation of critical discourse, and so also critical narrative analysis, as having the ability to reveal how discourse can "legitimize or delegitimize contested issues, persuade other actors, and negotiate over (new) meanings for corporate responsibilities" (p. 58). The way in which other NGO's communicate in regards to the "KONY 2012" campaign is either in comparison to the Invisible Children or in contrast to them, and will therefore either boost or deter the "KONY 2012" campaign. In addition, the comparison and contrast of these NGO's reveals their opinions on social media mobilization, seeing as the Internet played a large role in this mobilization campaign. Furthermore, the approach of critical narrative analysis allows for the identification of areas where interorganizational conflict takes place, as the areas of contrast are the areas of conflict.

Texts, Documents, and Artifacts

This research looks at the texts and videos communicated to the public via an NGO's website. "When a rhetorical act is transcribed and printed, posted on a web site, recorded on film, or preserved on canvas, it becomes a rhetorical artifact that then is accessible to a wider audience than the one that witnessed the rhetorical act. Both acts and artifacts are objects of rhetorical criticism" (Foss, 2004. p. 7). The texts and artifacts included in this research were analyzed to identify where NGO's Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International compare and contrast to Invisible Children in their discourse surrounding Joseph Kony, and the "KONY 2012" campaign. The NGO's Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were chosen due to the researchers familiarity with them, as well as their noted recognition worldwide.

This research included documents and videos from NGO's Amnesty International (See Appendix A), Human Rights Watch (See Appendix B), and from the Invisible Children (See Appendix C). These documents are found on the websites of these various NGO's, and so are available to the public. A query search using the word "Kony" was done on the websites of NGOs Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in order to obtain the documents included in this research. This search revealed over one hundred and forty documents and texts, however, due to the time restrictions posed on this research only those posted between March 5, 2012, to January 31, 2013 are included in this research. The videos included in this research can all be found on the video sharing site *YouTube*.

All of the documents and texts were collected from these websites between April 15, 2013 to April 21, 2013, and were published between March 5, 2012 and January 31, 2013. Some of the publishing dates are unknown, but can be speculated, such as the 'Annual Report' from the Invisible Children, of having a publish date of the early months of 2013. Some of the texts are

found on webpages, and others take the form of published documents such as annual reports, press releases and magazines.

A total of 8 documents and texts were included from NGO Amnesty International, 20 documents and texts, and one video from NGO Human Rights Watch, and 6 documents and three videos were included from the Invisible Children NGO. A number of the documents included from NGO Human Rights Watch have been published in traditional news media sources such as *The Washington Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *CNN*, the *Jurist*, and *Foreign Policy*. The length of these documents and texts varies, from one page to 86 pages.

These documents were read a minimum of three times. The documents were read first for familiarity. A second time in order to note prominent issue and topics, and a third time to develop these findings in more detail.

The videos included in this research were analyzed in a similar fashion and were watched a minimum of four times for familiarity, transcription, noting of prominent topics, and confirmation of findings. There are a total of 4 videos included in this research. These are 1) “*KONY 2012*” found on *YouTube* with 97,275,810 views, published on March 5, 2012 by the Invisiblechildreninc., with a viewing time of 29:59 minutes. 2) “*Kony 2012: Part II - Beyond Famous*” with 2,615,651 views on *YouTube*, released by Invisiblechildreninc. on April 5, 2012, with a viewing time of 19:48 minutes. 3) “*Invisible Children - YEAR IN REVIEW: 2012 - What it will take to stop Kony*” found on *YouTube* with 64,503 views, published on December 22, 2012, with a viewing time of 3:32 minutes. 4) “*Dear Obama: A message from victims of the LRA*”, found on the Human Rights Watch website as part of an article, with 57,331 views on *YouTube*, uploaded on November 10, 2010, with a viewing time of 4:30 minutes. As with the texts, watching the videos multiple times as well as the creation of transcriptions ensured the

confirmation of areas of comparison and contrast with the Invisible Children NGO as communicated by NGO's Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

These texts, documents, and artifacts compose a full picture of the interorganizational conflict between NGO's Invisible Children, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch surrounding the "KONY 2012" campaign. The different types of texts, documents, and artifacts also allow for a more diverse view of the situation as different mediums of communication were included such as published web texts and documents as well as videos.

Analysis & Findings

The aim of this research was to better understand the "KONY 2012" social media mobilization campaign and the discourse surrounding it in order to identify areas of comparison and contrast, between the Invisible Children NGO, and other non-governmental organizations, namely Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Critical narrative analysis of the texts, documents, and artifacts included in this research revealed three major areas of comparison and contrast. These areas are 1) online mobilization, 2) formal authority and discursive legitimacy, and 3) solutions to the Joseph Kony/ LRA problem. Interestingly, these three areas of comparison and contrast are reflexive of major points identified in the literature review. Following the presentation of the area of comparison or contrast, quotations from the texts and artifacts are presented in order to help the reader better understand the issues at play with the "KONY 2012" video and campaign as presented by the Invisible Children NGO.

"We created a film we thought could go viral. And then it did."

The Invisible Children NGO state one of their tasks to be that of mobilization both online and offline. "We mobilize massive groups of people to support and advance international efforts to end LRA atrocities" ("*Highlights from fy2012*," n.d., para. 6). Like many other NGO's,

mobilization of people willing to support causes enables them to bring about the change they desire. Mobilization of support boosts the cause and can help create the necessary exposure and public attention to mobilize yet more people. The “KONY 2012” campaign is an example of how the Internet and social networking sites can be harnessed to bring awareness to an issue on a worldwide scale, and mobilize support. Part of the strength of online mobilization lies in the speed of communication enabled by these sites and the Internet itself. The Internet has changed the ways in which we communicate, and the ways in which we mobilize, protest, and gather for means of social change. Morozov (2009) pointed to the potential changes in society as something which could be linked to the increased adoption of the Internet. The Invisible Children “KONY 2012” campaign set out to make use of the increased use of the Internet to change society.

If you've been on Twitter or Facebook recently, you've probably seen a new campaign called KONY 2012. It's gone viral. One million hits per hour. 12 million times. 60 million...One hundred million people. It's social media at its best. It's uniting people all across the world. It's the new way to move the world to action. (“*KONY 2012: Part II - Beyond Famous*” [Video file], 0:04-0:08)

“KONY 2012” has shown what was previously known, that the Internet can be used to communicate messages and spread information across the globe. Fisher and Boekkooi (2010) noted the Internet as a benefit to social movements and mobilization, as physical borders are no longer a hindrance to the reach and number of people a message can be communicated to.

“KONY 2012” have confirmed these benefits. From the sharing of the video *YouTube* link on Facebook, to the discourse on Twitter, “KONY 2012’ has seemingly achieved its goal of

making Joseph Kony, another rebel commander facing an ICC arrest warrant, notorious for his alleged crimes” (Becker, 2012, para. 2).

“*KONY 2012*” is the “fastest growing viral video in history,” and saw a 1,200 tweets per minute at its peak (“*Kony 2012: Year in review – results*,” 2013, n.p.). Howard and Parks (2012) noted the Internet’s abilities to influence society stating “if nothing else, social media may color civic discourse in particular ways” (p. 361). Noting the global discourse that came to be following the “*KONY 2012*” video release, Howard and Parks (2012) are correct that social media can influence public discourse. The Invisible Children also note the ability of the Internet is influencing society stating:

After eight years of work, the government finally heard us. And in October of 2011, a hundred American advisers were sent into Central Africa to assist the Ugandan army in arresting Kony and stopping the LRA...It was the first time in history that the United States took that kind of action because the people demanded it. (“*KONY 2012*” [Video file], 19:22-19:37)

The Internet and social media mobilization can influence global discourse, and in the Invisible Children have pointed out that this is possible.

The capabilities of the Internet were not ignored by the makers of the “*KONY 2012*” video. Chris Carver, COO of Invisible Children, pointed to this stating “because we regularly interact with our supporters in person and online, we were intentional about marketing through multiple channels so that people outside of our typical demographic would encounter *KONY 2012* in completely unexpected places” (“*Invisible children - 2012 annual report*,” 2013, p. 22). This campaign went against traditional means of communication such as television, radio, and print. “After making 10 documentaries, we approached *KONY 2012* a little differently. More

simply. We created a film we thought could go viral. And then it did” (“*Invisible children - 2012 annual report*,” 2013, p. 71). Having the video go viral was the key to the success of this video. No longer held back by traditional means of sharing the video such as at conferences or other public viewings, the Internet changed the scene for many more people to view and share this within their networks. “We are living in a new world, a Facebook world, in which 750 million people share ideas, not thinking in borders. It’s a global community, bigger than the U.S. Joseph Kony was committing crimes for twenty years and no one cared. We care” (“*KONY 2012*” [Video file], 27:37). The campaign made use of the sharing abilities of social networking sites, and in doing so was able to go global.

Noting the positive effects of the Internet in the “KONY 2012” campaign such as improved reach, critique remains over the use of the Internet in communication of mobilization messages. A review of literature pointed to this noting ‘clicktivism,’ ‘slacktivism,’ and other problems with online mobilization as a whole. Where the cost of being mobilized is less than traditional means, Della Porta and Mosca (2005) questioned the level of effectiveness of online mobilization taking the place of offline activism as they feel that the level of involvement with the issues is not the same. Showing up in person to a protest is very different from ‘liking’ or sharing something on Facebook. Involvement by those mobilized has changed, as mobilization and participation in social change movements can now be done with the click of a mouse unlike traditional means of mobilization which required more effort such as being present at a rally, donating funds, or spreading leaflets. Ward et al. (2003) stated “sitting in front of a computer screen is not the same as taking part in a live demonstration or protest. Nor is it likely to inspire people to further action in the same way as face-to-face protest” (pp. 655-656). They question whether or not the Internet is able to bring about the same level of involvement as traditional

means of mobilization. Christensen (2011) reinforced this stating that “internet activities have been criticized for being ‘slacktivism,’ where the real life impact of the activities is limited; the main effect is to enhance the feel-good factor for participants” (para. 1). These issues with online mobilization, an area of contrast between NGOs, were seen in the critical narrative analysis of texts and documents for this research. The Invisible Children NGO pointed to the criticism the campaign received the “*KONY 2012: Part II - Beyond Famous*” video stating:

It's the new way to move the world to action. This movie is not without critics, Critics say the film manipulates the facts. Simplifying the story. Over-simplifying a wildly complex issue. That the message is too late. Joseph Kony and his forces have been significantly reduced. Pro-war activism, utterly naive. By this time next week this will be a passing fad. These white Westerners sort of getting on the band wagon and that they actually haven't got a clue what they're talking about. (0:19-0:23)

Invisible Children are aware that that the “KONY 2012” campaign has been widely critiqued, and make a point to state this in their follow up video “*KONY 2012: Part II - Beyond Famous.*” From the timeliness of the video, to an oversimplified story of the situation, to the white man’s duty to save the world, noting the critique publicly helps to create the idea of transparency on the part of Invisible Children.

Critique for the campaign came from many different organizations, and there was an evident disagreement on the subject, goal, and success of the campaign. Critical narrative analysis of NGO Human Rights Watch showed them to be evident in their criticism of the campaign, questioning multiple times in various web articles the success of the “KONY 2012” campaign.

What will it take to end the LRA's reign of terror? Millions of young people across the world watching a video about Kony's crimes won't end the brutality. But the massive attention generated by Kony's unprecedented global notoriety should be harnessed to transform good intentions into concrete and effective action. (Sawyer, 2012, para. 3)

Here, Human Rights Watch notes the worldwide reach of the video, and states that this is part of the solution and should be taken advantage of in order to bring about the real change which they believe a video cannot. Watching a video is not enough to stop Joseph Kony and the LRA, and Human Rights Watch wants readers to know this.

The "*KONY 2012*" video helped gain attention to Joseph Kony and the LRA actions in Uganda. Turning mass public attention into real change is a theme that Human Rights Watch emphasizes over and over in their communication regarding this issue.

But the question is whether all this public attention, welcome as it is, will help lead to Kony's arrest. And more important, whether it can jumpstart international action to stop the LRA's abuses and protect civilians living in vulnerable areas. (Van Woudenberg, 2012, para. 6)

Human Rights Watch knows that the situation with Joseph Kony is an ongoing problem. It is not for nothing that Joseph Kony remains on the original Forbes Most Wanted list (Forbes, 2011), and that the International Criminal Court has issued a warrant for his arrest, noting war crimes and crimes against humanity (Vardi, 2012). Human Rights Watch knows this and therefore continually questions the ability of one viral video to start the necessary action needed to stop Kony and the LRA. The solution in the eyes of Human Rights Watch is not as simple as the "*KONY 2012*" video made it out to be. Capturing Joseph Kony is only part of the problem, the other part as Human Rights Watch notes is the protection of those affected by the LRA.

In a web article titled “*Q&A on Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army,*” aimed to answer public questions surrounding the “KONY 2012” campaign and video, Human Rights Watch once again points to the need for real action. Watching a video will not solve the problem.

The video has significantly increased public awareness about Kony and the LRA’s crimes and led many people to ask questions about how to end the abuses. Watching a video about the LRA will not, on its own, result in Kony’s apprehension or end LRA abuses. But the massive interest generated by the video could, and should, be harnessed to transform good intentions into concrete and effective action. (“*Q&A on Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army,*” 2012, March 21, para. 57)

Human Rights Watch recognizes the popularity of the “*KONY 2012*” video, and the worldwide recognition it has received. The public awareness of Joseph Kony and the LRA is something they welcome as an NGO who also works towards creating better situations for people all over the world, and wants to see the atrocities of the LRA and Joseph Kony stopped. Therefore, despite criticizing the campaign and questioning whether or not the public attention and the watching of a video has the ability to bring about change, Human Rights Watch does state that this attention needs to be used for the greater good, and the improvement of the situations of those affected by Joseph Kony and the LRA.

Despite the criticism that Human Rights Watch has for the Invisible Children NGO and their “KONY 2012” campaign, they recognize that however little it may seem to be done by online mobilization, something is happening.

Just by “liking” a video on Facebook, can young people actually make a difference in bringing Kony to justice? On the face of it, this appears naïve. Yet it is hard to deny that

the overall impact of *millions* of people – including people in Congo, CAR, South Sudan, and Uganda – watching the film, tweeting about it, posting it on their Facebook walls, and yes, buying bracelets, can have an impact. It demonstrates to political leaders that ordinary people care about this issue and expect to see action. (Sawyer, 2012, para. 13)

Recognition that something is more than nothing follows the lines of Bailyn (2012), who stated that the adoption of the Internet would lead to an increase in small actions such as the sharing of a video, or updating of a Facebook status. Small actions are still actions, and this needs to be recognized. “Social media’s power lies in its vast reach, and using it we will soon be able to accomplish more with a few mouse clicks than was possible with a small army a hundred years ago” (Bailyn, 2012, para. 11). So while the Internet may be criticized for creating ‘slacktivists’ or ‘clicktivists’, this new form of mobilization can accomplish more than what traditional means of mobilization could ever have hoped to do.

As seen in the critical narrative analysis, mobilization of individuals, the goal of Invisible Children in their “KONY 2012” campaign is not something agreed upon by NGO’s. Invisible Children used the “*KONY 2012*” video and campaign to try to mobilize individuals and capture and bring to justice Joseph Kony. Human Rights Watch is abundantly clear in their critique of the campaign and video, questioning the ability of this campaign to bring about real world change. Watching a video, according to Human Rights Watch is not enough. While Human Rights Watch praises the campaigns ability to bring worldwide awareness to the situation, Joseph Kony and the LRA, more needs to be done. Mobilization, in the eyes of Human Rights Watch is more than the reception of worldwide attention.

Decades of documentation; NGO's in conflict

Conflict between organizations exists in formal authority, control of critical resources “such as expertise, money, equipment, information, etc.,” and discursive legitimacy (Hardy & Phillips, 1998, p. 219). Situations of dependency for critical resources create uneven power situations which organizations with power can take advantage of. For NGOs, having more money, or better information can lead to more exposure and the ability to take on more projects. It is in the control of these three that organizations, and more specifically, NGO's are able to become larger players in the landscape of NGO's and worthy causes. Where funding is scarce and highly competed for, competition is fierce. However, it is in the formal authority and discursive legitimacy that the most notable conflicts exist in the case of the “KONY 2012” campaign and video. These issues play out in texts and artifacts included in this critical narrative analysis, and make abundantly clear that formal authority and discursive legitimacy revolving around Joseph Kony and the LRA is an area of friction rooted in time.

Analysis of the texts and artifacts reveal an underlying conflict focused on which NGO has the formal authority and discursive legitimacy to represent those affected by Joseph Kony and the LRA. While the Invisible Children NGO has produced a video and a large campaign surrounding this issue, both NGO's Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch believe that they too have the formal authority and discursive legitimacy to represent this issue. For those affected by Joseph Kony and the LRA, the more coverage the better, and so, each NGO willing to represent this cause, or any cause for that matter, takes up the formal authority and discursive legitimacy in doing so. Analysis of the texts and artifacts included in this research revealed that both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have long been activists for the capture of Joseph Kony and the bringing of aid to those affected by the LRA. The story and situation

presented by the Invisible Children in their “*KONY 2012*” video was not something new, and this is an issue which both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch conflict on with the Invisible Children NGO. Texts published on both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch websites point to an ongoing presentation of the problems associated with Joseph Kony and the LRA to the public, and it would seem that both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch wish to reinforce that this is an ongoing issue over time, and that they both have over time been involved with this issue. So, while the Invisible Children NGO has brought much needed attention to this issue, they were not the first to recognize the need for change and the capture and arrest of Joseph Kony and the LRA. Texts on the Human Rights website make statements in this regard:

Human Rights Watch has spent years investigating the horrors perpetrated by the LRA in Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan. (“*Capturing Kony*,” 2012, March 09, para. 1)

The emphasis here is on time, stating that they have “spent years investigating” points to their ongoing attention and coverage of the situation and Joseph Kony (“*Capturing Kony*,” 2012, March 09, para. 1). Further in the text, Human Rights Watch again notes their long involvement stating:

Human Rights Watch has long urged a concerted international response to assist regional efforts to arrest Kony and other LRA leaders subject to arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court. (“*Capturing Kony*,” 2012, March 09, para. 4)

In the same text, repetition of involvement is made. Stating that “Human Rights Watch has long urged” points to a continued involvement with the issues at play. It is not only the Invisible Children NGO at work here, and Human Rights Watch wants readers to understand and be aware

of this. While Invisible Children has been able to create the much needed attention, they were not the only ones here, and Human Rights Watch wishes to point out that they are actually newcomers.

Other texts show the long involvement of Human Rights Watch on the issue of Joseph Kony and the LRA. Here the emphasis is not on Joseph Kony, but on the LRA as a group.

For years Human Rights Watch has investigated the LRA's horrors, from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan. (Sawyer, 2012, para. 1)

In this text, the statement "for years Human Rights Watch has investigated the LRA's horrors", further notes the other areas which they have investigated (Sawyer, 2012, para. 1). One of the criticisms Invisible Children received was that Joseph Kony and the LRA were no longer in Uganda, and that the video therefore does not tell the truth about the current situation ("*KONY 2012*" [video file]). Here, Human Rights Watch is reinforcing that they have done a more thorough investigation of the issue and have investigated the LRA from different angles over time, unlike the Invisible Children NGO.

Other texts show the deeper involvement of Human Rights Watch with the issues surrounding Joseph Kony, more specifically the use of child soldiers, one of the key issues presented in the video.

Around the globe, Human Rights Watch has documented the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. Today, child soldiers are fighting in at least 14 countries. ("*Child soldiers worldwide*," 2012, March 12, para. 1)

One of the focus areas of the Invisible Children "*KONY 2012*" video is the use of child soldiers by the LRA. In this text, Human Rights Watch further reinforces their involvement with this

issue over a long span, noting their documentation of the issue of child soldiers worldwide, not only in Uganda.

In addition to the continued documentation and involvement with Joseph Kony, the LRA, and the use of child soldiers worldwide, Human Rights Watch has also, over time, documented human rights violations.

Human Rights Watch has documented continued human rights violations in central Africa by forces under the commands of Kony and Ntaganda. (*ICC: Push justice forward*,” 2012, November 12, para. 4)

Noting this for readers further emphasizes that the issues presented in the Invisible Children “*KONY 2012*” video are not something new, and are issues that have been noted over a longer period of time.

It is in the repetition that Human Rights Watch has long investigated these issues, that interorganizational conflict between NGO’s can be seen. Human Rights Watch repeatedly states that this is an ongoing issue that they have covered over a long duration, and in doing so claim formal authority and discursive legitimacy on these issues as they were there before the Invisible Children choose to get involved. Statements such as “we’ve spent years” (*Capturing Kony*,” 2012, March 09, para. 1), “for years” (Sawyer, 2012, para. 1), “has long urged” (*Capturing Kony*,” 2012, March 09, para. 4), all point to an involvement of Human Rights Watch with the issue of Joseph Kony and the LRA over an ongoing period of time. While the Invisible Children NGO could be stated as bringing an increased awareness to this issue, Human Rights Watch seems to be pushing the statement that they were there first. This could also be further rooted in the fact that the Invisible Children NGO was more successful in bringing worldwide public awareness to this issue with their “*KONY 2012*” campaign and video. Human Rights Watch

points to their formal authority and discursive legitimacy for this issue as being based on their proven involvement with this issue over time, and so point to a disagreement with the Invisible Children having this power simply because they have been more successful in the mobilization of people at a worldwide scale to become involved with this issue.

The interorganizational conflict between NGO's over formal authority and discursive legitimacy as something rooted in time can also be seen in the texts analyzed from Amnesty International. Similar to Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International states that the Joseph Kony and the LRA are topics long covered, reinforcing that the Invisible Children NGO is not the first to try to bring change to the situation.

For many years, Amnesty International has been calling for the LRA leaders to be arrested. (*Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,* 2012, March 08, para. 3)

The "KONY 2012" campaign is not the first to bring attention to the fact that the LRA leaders need to be brought to justice. Amnesty International has long made this an issue, and here they point to their involvement in the past. "For many years" (*Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,* 2012, March 08, para. 3), is a statement to this fact. Formal authority and discursive legitimacy in the eyes of Amnesty International, like Human Rights Watch, should be given based on the duration of involvement with an issue.

Campaigning for the arrest of LRA leaders, and the documentation of the crimes committed by those members of the LRA, has also been an issue noted by Amnesty International over many years.

For more than two decades, Amnesty International has documented crimes committed by the Lord's Resistance Army and their horrific impact on the lives of thousands of

civilians in Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. (*“Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,”* 2012, March 08, para. 5)

In the text above, Amnesty International notes their involvement with these issues “for more than two decades” (*“Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,”* 2012, March 08, para. 5). This is a statement that surpasses even the involvement of Human Rights Watch, who make statements such as “extensively documented” (*“Obama sends military support to help combat LRA rebels,”* 2012, January 12, para. 4), and “we’ve spent years investigating” (Van Woudenberg, 2012, para. 1).

Similar to Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International also notes their involvement with the issues of human rights violations in the case of the LRA in Uganda.

Amnesty International has also documented human rights violations committed by the Uganda People’s Defense Forces against the civilian communities where the LRA were present, and against captured LRA members. (*“Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,”* 2012, March 08, para. 6)

The LRA, Joseph Kony, and the problems which have come because of them are issues that have been present for numerous years. Noting for readers the long involvement of Amnesty International, like the texts of Human Rights Watch, point out an involvement over time for a period much longer than Invisible Children, and indicate a right to represent this issue.

For NGO’s Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International formal authority and discursive legitimacy is gained with continued involvement over time. Both NGO’s point out to in their texts that issues such as the use of child soldiers, human rights violations, the LRA and Joseph Kony are all issues which they have investigated and documented over a long period of

time. Time is therefore a key issue when looking at formal authority and discursive legitimacy when it comes to NGOs and the representation of issues. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have rooted their formal authority and discursive legitimacy in the fact that they have been involved for a longer period of time than Invisible Children. Amnesty International however, takes it even further noting a longer period of involvement “for more than two decades” (“*Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,*” 2012, March 08, para. 5), than even that of NGO Human Rights Watch’s “for years” (Sawyer, 2012, para. 1). Both NGO’s Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International make statements pointing to the fact that they have been involved longer than Invisible Children, and Amnesty International points to an involvement longer than Human Rights Watch.

Amnesty International also takes on a similar stance to that of the Human Rights Watch NGO, repeating that this is not a new issue that Invisible Children is covering, and that they too have long lobbied for increased public awareness of this situation. Invisible Children has been more successful than Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in bringing public awareness and in mobilization around this issue, and this could be suggested as the underlying area of friction. Invisible Children is the hero of those affected by Joseph Kony and the LRA, without having invested a similar amount of time as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Invisible Children is receiving all of the credit for mobilization around this issue, and has succeeded in gaining the worldwide attention at rates exceeding those of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. No NGO wishes to be overlooked for their proven involvement in an issue, and have another NGO be more successful in their campaigning actions. This all points to conflict between these NGO’s on who has the formal authority and discursive legitimacy to be the speaker on behalf of those affected by Joseph Kony and the LRA. Human

Rights Watch and Amnesty International point to formal authority and discursive legitimacy to be rooted in time. Investing time into an issue would therefore allow an NGO the formal authority and discursive legitimacy. Invisible Children however does not follow these rules, becoming a key player and a publicly recognized formal authority and discursive legitimacy with Joseph Kony and the LRA simply because of a successful viral video campaign.

Invisible Children deliberately choose to make this film differently than their other films, and did not use the traditional means of communication to spread their message, and did so successfully (*"Invisible children - 2012 annual report,"* 2013). The idea that formal authority and discursive legitimacy are rooted in time can be seen in the critical narrative analysis of texts and documents from NGO's Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The Invisible Children NGO however disagrees. With new ways to communicate messages, formal authority and discursive legitimacy could see a shift from the NGO with the longest proven involvement, to the NGO with the voice heard by most, in this case Invisible Children.

Many solutions to the Joseph Kony problem

Conflict over which NGO is the formal authority and has the discursive legitimacy in the case of Joseph Kony and the LRA, further penetrates the area of solutions. The idea that the NGO with formal authority and discursive legitimacy of the issues surrounding Joseph Kony is also the NGO with the best solution, and the one which will be the most listened to. As seen in the previous section, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International root their formal authority and discursive legitimacy in time, unlike the Invisible Children which roots it in the worldwide reach and the visibility of the campaign. The interorganizational conflict over solutions is very much the same. This ties into earlier literature from Dredge (2006) who stated that "power differentials play a part in who participates, how engagement takes place and what issues are

identified and moved forward” (p. 563). While Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are both NGO’s within the domain of non-governmental organizations, the right to speak and the ability to have their voice heard is very much dependent on the amount of power they have.

Edwards et al. (1999) pointed to conflict between NGO’s as being partially rooted in the differing solutions they pose for problems stating that “NGOs are unlikely to agree on the details of how to confront globalization and issues of conflict and humanitarian action, still less on their implications for NGOs as organizations” (pp. 133-134). This is ever present in the case of Joseph Kony and the LRA. While all of the NGOs can agree that Joseph Kony needs to be arrested and held accountable for his actions, there are varying opinions on how this is to best take place.

The problems with Joseph Kony and the LRA seem to be agreed upon by NGOs, and rightfully so. In this story the antagonist Joseph Kony and his LRA must be stopped. How the story ends however is not agreed upon. The Invisible Children in the “*KONY 2012*” video made their solution to the problem simply to make Joseph Kony famous in order to gain awareness for the situation, in turn influence policy makers, and he would be found, arrested, and brought to justice. However, the solution to the problem may not be as simple as what the Invisible Children posed. Looking at the texts and artifacts included in this research confirms Edwards et al.’s (1999) statement that NGO’s are in disagreement over solutions.

In the case of Joseph Kony and the LRA, it would seem that the Invisible Children NGO has the power within the domain, and so it is their voice which is heard over those of the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The solution they present in the “*KONY 2012*” video is that Joseph Kony needs to be made famous (“*KONY 2012*” [Video file]). The Invisible Children further explains how this can be made possible:

Here it is. Ready? In order for Kony to be arrested this year, the Ugandan military has to find him. In order to find him, they need the technology and training to track him in the vast jungle. That's where the American advisers come in. But in order for the American advisers to be there, the U.S. government has to deploy them. They've done that, but if the government doesn't believe that people care about arresting Kony, the mission will be canceled. In order for the people to care, they have to know. And they will only know if Kony's name is everywhere. (*"KONY 2012"* [Video file], 21:40)

The solution, in the opinion of the Invisible Children NGO, is to make Joseph Kony famous, which can be done through raising awareness within the public and government. This will bring about the deployment of the U.S. army to Uganda, and so aid the Ugandan military with the much needed training and technology to do so. It seems simple.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International do not see the solution to the Joseph Kony problem as simply making him famous, sending U.S. troops, and capturing Kony. While there are areas on which these NGO's disagree upon in the solution, there are also areas in which these NGO's agree. One of these areas is the protection of civilians. Texts from Human Rights Watch point to this, including statements such as:

The arrest of LRA leaders sought by the ICC, including Joseph Kony, is a central element of any strategy to end LRA atrocities in the countries where the rebel armed group operates. But enhanced arrest efforts and broader and more effective measures to protect civilians endangered by the LRA—including those who may be at heightened risk from an arrest operation—are also needed. (*"Q&A on Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army,"* 2012, March 21, para. 18)

Human Rights Watch points to a need to protect other individuals who may be at risk in the capturing of Joseph Kony and other LRA leaders. These individuals need to also be taken into account.

NGO Amnesty International is in agreement with Human Rights Watch that civilian protection needs to be on the forefront of any solution to the Kony problem. Civilian protection and the protection of human rights in the process must not be ignored.

Every effort must also be taken to protect the civilian communities where the LRA are present, recognizing that they are at grave danger of attack and being forcibly recruited into the LRA...Anyone joining the Kony 2012 campaign should insist that efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights. It is also vital to make sure that any action ensures the protection of civilians in the surrounding areas...The death of any of the accused men would deny justice to the victims of LRA abuses. (*Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,* 2012, March 08, para. 8)

The respecting of human rights, and the protection of civilians, in the eyes of Amnesty International is part of the solution to this problem. Without doing so those affected by the LRA and Kony will be ignored, and justice will not have been served.

Civilian protection is a major part in the solution presented by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. However, this is only part of the solution agreed Any solution to the problem of Joseph Kony must address this issue as well as do it in accordance to international humanitarian law. Human Rights Watch state:

Any effort to arrest Kony should be accompanied by increased protection for civilians to prevent retaliatory attacks, better demobilization efforts to encourage defection; rehabilitation programs for former LRA fighters and captives; and enhanced

communications systems for communities. And regional forces need to strictly observe international humanitarian law. (Sawyer, 2012, para. 17)

Human Rights Watch offers a solution which seems to better take into account the complexity of the issue. Capturing Kony is not as simple as making him famous. The civilians need to be taken into account, as well as the former child soldiers of the LRA and their rehabilitation. Furthermore, stating that any action needs to follow international humanitarian law points to a recognition that the U.S. army cannot simply come in and do whatever they feel is best.

Amnesty International reflect this opinion, also noting the need for any action to be taken in accordance to international law.

It is important to remember that many of LRA members were themselves victims of human rights violations including forcible recruitment...Forces pursuing the LRA must seek to arrest the suspects in accordance with international law. (*"Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,"* 2012, March 08, para. 7)

Following the law in any action that will be taken is of utmost importance. The victims of the LRA have already experienced multiple human rights violations and so they must not be overlooked in any solution, and the international law must be followed in order to ensure their rights are not violated further.

The issue of the protection of civilians is one that is agreed upon by NGO's Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. However, these NGO's are not in agreement on all of the solutions to the Kony problem Human Rights Watch notes the early warning system set up by the Invisible Children as a good start but that there is a better solution:

Civilians in remote areas need an early-warning system to relay word of LRA attacks to get a rapid intervention from UN peacekeepers. Invisible Children, the group behind the

Kony2012 video, helped to set up a radio system in northern Congo, but a cell phone tower network would be even more effective. The US government has committed to building such towers but implementation has been extremely slow. (Van Woudenberg, 2012, para. 13)

The early warning system set up by the Invisible Children is radio based, however Human Rights Watch believes that a cell phone system would be a more efficient solution, noting that the US government's backing of this initiative but that these measures need to be sped up in order to be more effective.

NGO Amnesty International does not agree with NGO's Human Rights Watch and Invisible Children that the involvement and leadership of the U.S. government and army is the right solution. Both Invisible Children and Human Rights Watch are advocates for the aid of the U.S. government to Ugandan forces in the capture of Joseph Kony and LRA leaders. Amnesty International does not feel that this is how it must take place.

Amnesty International believes that efforts to arrest Joseph Kony should be led by the governments of the countries in the region where the LRA operates, not by the US armed forces. The UN and the African Union, both of which are involved in the effort to arrest the LRA suspects, also have an essential role to play in supporting efforts to arrest the LRA leaders, in protecting affected communities and monitoring and reporting on the status of human rights protection. (*"Efforts to arrest Joseph Kony must respect human rights,"* 2012, March 08, para. 9)

The U.S. army is, in the eyes of Amnesty International, not the solution. Bringing Kony to justice needs to be done by the governments and armies of the people in the regions and not from

outside. It is in doing so that Amnesty International believes that the human rights of civilians will be best protected and taken into account.

The solution to the Joseph Kony problem is mixed, and NGO's are in agreement and disagreement on different points. Here interorganizational conflict can be seen. Invisible Children pose a seemingly simple solution with the making famous of Joseph Kony. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International point to the protection of civilians and the following of international law as key. Amnesty International is not in agreement with the leadership of the U.S. army of the arrest of Kony, and Human Rights Watch points to the need for a cell phone based warning system over the radio based on the Invisible Children have set up.

The disagreement among NGO's on the solution confirm Edwards et al.'s (1999) statement that "NGOs are unlikely to agree on the details of how to confront globalization and issues of conflict and humanitarian action, still less on their implications for NGOs as organizations" (pp. 133-134). Invisible Children, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International agree to an extent, but not fully. This contrast on the solution further plays into which solution will be listened to and put into action. Dredge (2006) stated that "power differentials play a part in who participates, how engagement takes place and what issues are identified and moved forward" (p. 563). This in combination with the ideas of formal authority and discursive legitimacy, make the representation of a cause and the solution to that problem one that sees contrast between NGO's. The NGO with the largest voice is therefore also the NGO whose solution will most likely be adopted, despite disagreement with other NGO's. In the case of Joseph Kony it is the voice of the Invisible Children NGO which will be listened to, and has been listened to. Action in the case of Joseph Kony sparked by the "*KONY 2012*" video was seen almost instantaneously, seeing the "Kony 2012 resolution is introduced in the House of

Representatives 8 days after the launch of KONY 2012” (*“Epic progress - Program Stats, Political Stats, Social Stats,”* n.d., n.p.). This sparked investigation from other governments. On “March 19, 2012, UK parliament conducts LRA inquiry,” and on “April 23, Obama extends deployment of U.S advisors to help stop LRA” (*“Invisible Children - 2012 annual report,”* 2013, pp.32-33).

Discussion & Conclusion

This critical narrative analysis aimed to answer the following research question:

In what ways do non-governmental organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch compare and contrast in their discourse surrounding the social media mobilization campaign “KONY 2012” as put forth by the Invisible Children?

Comparison and contrast between NGO’s was noted in the areas of 1) online mobilization, 2) formal authority and discursive legitimacy, and 3) the solutions to the Joseph Kony/ LRA problem. The areas of contrast however are rooted in the struggle for formal authority and discursive legitimacy. The NGO with the most formal authority and discursive legitimacy could dictate the form of the mobilization campaign, the focus the campaign will take, and the solution to the problem most listened too by the public. The Invisible Children challenged the formal authority and discursive legitimacy of NGO’s Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International with their “KONY 2012” campaign and video. Seeing how the Invisible Children NGO challenged these NGO’s in these areas should be taken into account by NGO’s, as there are other campaigns in the future which could do the same. Formal authority and discursive legitimacy are therefore things which can fluctuate, and the amount an NGO has at the moment can change.

The “KONY 2012” campaign and video challenged traditions of mobilization communication by taking on the form of a viral video and social media campaign. Unlike

traditional methods of mobilization which took forms of petitions, sit-ins and rallies, this campaign made use of the benefits offered by the Internet such as decreased costs, and increased rate and reach to individuals for mobilization. Ward et al. (2003) point to the use of Internet technologies by other NGOs stating:

CAFOD, Age Concern, Greenpeace, and Oxfam have started to develop the notion of the e-activist, where web surfers can sign up not only to receive additional regular information but also to ‘take part in campaigns from the comfort of one’s own armchair’, as Oxfam puts it. (p. 661)

Invisible Children is not the first NGO to take note of the possibilities the Internet has to offer. Other NGO’s such as Greenpeace and Oxfam are changing their mobilization campaigns in order to target the e-activist. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, in this area, seem to be trailing behind the NGO field making use of these technologies. Using the Internet for social change offers them many different opportunities to take advantage of, and could aid in the success of future campaigns. Mobilization is changing and NGO’s need to take note.

The “*KONY 2012*” video and campaign challenged the traditional views on formal authority and discursive legitimacy rooted in time, as seen by Human rights Watch and Amnesty International, by becoming quickly associated and well recognized as the voice for those affected by the LRA, and for the capture of Joseph Kony. No longer following the accepted rule of time as a factor in deciding who has the formal authority and therefore the discursive legitimacy to speak on behalf of those affected, Invisible Children became a well-recognized authority on the issue of Joseph Kony, and the LRA, almost overnight. This unlike NGO’s Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International who both note years of documentation and investigation. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, among other NGO’s, noting this could choose to shed

new light on previously documented issues as the “KONY 2012” campaign did, and in doing so bring about the change they had hoped to bring but were then unable to. Social change campaigns are no longer coverage of the latest problem, but can be repetition of issues previously noted, an even repetition of problems documented by other NGO’s in the past.

It would seem that it is never too late to take on ongoing problems, even ones NGO’s themselves have never before been involved with. Simply because the issue was not resolved in the past does not mean it cannot be overcome in the future, or even by another NGO. Traditional or more conservative ideas on social change campaigns have been challenged in that it is no longer the NGO who believes they have, or share, the formal authority or discursive legitimacy over an issue due to the duration of their involvement. The Invisible Children NGO with their “KONY 2012” campaign showed that an NGO can take on an issue they have never been involved with before and become a formal authority and gain discursive legitimacy over that issue overnight. This is good practical information that NGO’s should take note of. Social change mobilization and NGO campaigns could be seeing a shift from what Natsios (1995) stated as ambulance chasing, and gaining exposure through campaigns based on the latest tragedies. The Invisible Children took an older ongoing issue and made it front page news. Other NGO’s could do the same.

In becoming the formal authority and gaining discursive legitimacy in the area of Joseph Kony and the LRA, the Invisible Children further challenge the solutions posed by long time players Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, by posing a solution which was adopted despite disagreement from other NGO’s. Joseph Kony needed to be made famous and the video accomplished that. Invisible Children note a need for governmental and army support in Uganda and this happened. While these are solutions not agreed upon by long time players

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the voice of the Invisible Children is heard loud and clear.

It is interesting to note that the video not only challenged Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International's traditional views of mobilization by taking an online form, it further goes on to challenge the ideas on popularity of viral videos based on time. The "*KONY 2012*" video notes another challenge of traditional views based on time in the length of their viral video. While viral videos have not existed for very long, "traditional" views on their popularity as linked to their length can be seen here. The popularity of the video is surprising, as the average length of the top 10 most viral videos is an average of 4:25 minutes, and the "*KONY 2012*" video is 29:59 minutes ("*Invisible Children - 2012 annual report*," 2013, p. 31). The length of the "*KONY 2012*" video surpasses the length of other popular viral videos many times over. Taking into account the length of the video in comparison to other popular videos which are significantly shorter, the campaign further breaks viral video traditions along the way.

The friction between NGO's as a result of the creation of the "*KONY 2012*" campaign and video, as put forth by the Invisible Children NGO, point to changes in the area of mobilization as a whole. The interorganizational conflict presented in this research is rooted in the challenging of the Invisible Children of the traditions in mobilization. From the creation of an online video and social media campaign, to the challenging of traditionally recognized power based on time spend investigating and documenting causes, to the solutions posed and adopted worldwide. The Invisible Children, in this critical narrative analysis, see interorganizational conflict in the breaking of tradition.

Increasing adoption of the Internet, and the successes of the "*KONY 2012*" campaign and video point to a need for an increased understanding of the use of the Internet in mobilization

campaigns. If the Invisible Children can break traditional ideas of mobilization, formal authority and discursive legitimacy with one campaign, knowing how this is done and the results of it will lead to a better understanding of online mobilization campaigns in the future. Overall, the “KONY 2012” campaign and video challenge traditional ideas, and manage to be successful in doing so.

This critical narrative analysis contributes to a better understanding of interorganizational conflict between NGO’s as a whole, and more specifically between Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Invisible Children. Mobilization campaigns are key to NGO’s and the communication of these campaigns can lead to successes and the gaining of much needed funds, or to the limited visibility of a campaign. Knowing the dynamics and the issues at play in the domain of NGO’s contributes to a better understanding of the areas of friction they experience in their communication will lead to a better understanding of how NGO’s can be successful in communicating campaigns in the future.

The “KONY 2012” campaign and the breaking of traditions surrounding mobilization, communication, and viral videos also has social implications that need to be considered. While Invisible Children has been successful in having their voice heard, it is the hushing of other voices which is troubling. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International pose valid arguments in the case of the solutions for the Joseph Kony problem, however it is the voice of the Invisible Children which is most heard, and which is being acted upon despite the criticism it has received both from individuals and from organizations. Allowing for a discourse which includes many different voices could bring about the best solution, as it would take into account various different opinions and ideas. However, literature from Edwards et al.’s (1999) on the disagreement between NGO’s on solutions was proven correct in this research. Human Rights

Watch, Amnesty International, and Invisible Children agreed upon different aspects of the solution, and disagreed in others. However, it is the solution of the Invisible Children which is acted upon and therefore most visible to the public and those individuals being mobilized in this campaign. In ignoring the other NGO solutions the Invisible Children is showing a skewed picture of how this problem is to be solved, and that has social implications on how this campaign will be viewed, and on how other NGO's are viewed.

The future of “KONY 2012” research

Due to the time in which this critical narrative analysis was performed, decisions needed to be made on the inclusion and exclusion of NGO's, as well as on the time frame used for the inclusion and exclusion of texts, documents, and artifacts. Further research in the area of interorganizational conflict between NGO's on the issue of the “KONY 2012” campaign as put on by the Invisible Children NGO, could include more NGO's. The inclusion of more NGO's could reveal other areas of comparison and contrast with the Invisible Children NGO and the “KONY 2012” campaign, different than those uncovered in this research. The inclusion of other NGO's would also boost the number of texts, documents, and artifacts in this research and would therefore better confirm the findings of this research. Should this research be replicated, it is suggested that additional NGO's be included in order to create a better understanding of the interorganizational conflict experienced within the NGO domain as it pertains to the Invisible Children NGO and their “KONY 2012” campaign.

The issue of time also comes into play in relation to the end date of the campaign. Time was also an issue in relation to the end date of the campaign. This critical narrative analysis was completed while the campaign was ongoing. Should the campaign be successful, and achieve its

goal of the capture of Joseph Kony and other LRA leaders, this research could look at the campaign as a whole, and not as an ongoing process.

Overall, this critical narrative analysis has revealed that the Invisible Children NGO has challenged traditional views of mobilization, formal authority and discursive legitimacy held by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International with its “KONY 2012” campaign. In addition, this research revealed areas of comparison and contrast between NGOs Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International rooted in time. Being the formal authority and having the discursive legitimacy is no longer based on the years an NGO has been investigating and documenting an issue. Furthermore, social change campaigns no longer need to be based on the most recent events, and can take ongoing issues and bring them back to the forefront of people’s attention. Using technologies like the Internet, can allow NGO’s to boost their mobilization goals, and bring about the desired change.

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