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„The Impact of “Write for Rights” Campaigns on Human Rights Situations – A Case Study of Amnesty International“

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Abstract (English)

Amnesty International's campaign *Write for Rights* is a prominent example for the work of one of the biggest human rights NGOs worldwide. This campaign focuses on creating awareness, raising voices in cases of human rights abuse worldwide. The NGO was founded by Peter Benenson, a British lawyer in the 1960s and has gained more than seven million supporters and members. The organization was able to gain massive support for their annual campaign *Write for Rights* with more than five million actions taken in 2017. It is set-up around chosen figurehead cases each year since 2002. This study tries to explore and understand the impact of this Amnesty International campaign. It does so by first collating data on the campaigns, namely listing the cases of the last four years (2015-2018) and highlighting the human rights issues, the countries, and other factors. Secondly, the study tries to understand the factors for an (un)successful *Write for Rights* campaign. The data was gathered through the systematic collation of *Write for Rights* campaign materials and through expert interviews. The analysis revealed that the main focus of the *Write for Rights* campaign is a positive human rights impact mainly on individuals. In most cases, people who are active in human rights work are chosen for the campaign and the rights that are violated are often similar: e.g. freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. The impact of *Write for Rights* generally is on an individual level, improving the lives of the cases, which is also due to the campaign being constructed as such and not trying to tackle policy changes generally.

Abstract (Deutsch)

Die Amnesty International Kampagne *Write for Rights* (zu deutsch Briefmarathon) ist ein herausragendes Beispiel für die Arbeit einer der größten Menschenrechts-NGOs weltweit. Diese Kampagne konzentriert sich darauf Bewusstsein für und Stimmen gegen Fällen von Menschenrechtsverletzungen auf der ganzen Welt zu schaffen und zu sammeln. Die NGO wurde in den 1960er Jahren von Peter Benenson einem britischen Anwalt gegründet und hat seitdem mehr als sieben Millionen Unterstützer und Mitglieder gewonnen. Die Organisation konnte mit mehr als fünf Millionen Aktionen im Jahr 2017 massive Unterstützung für ihre jährliche Kampagne *Write for Rights* (Briefmarathon) gewinnen. Seit 2002 konzentriert sich die Kampagne jedes Jahr auf ausgewählte Fälle. Diese Studie versucht, die Auswirkungen dieser Kampagne zu untersuchen und zu verstehen. Dazu werden zunächst Daten zu den Kampagnen gesammelt, d.h. die Fälle der letzten vier Jahre aufgelistet (2015 - 2018) und hinsichtlich der Menschenrechte, der Länder und anderer Faktoren untersucht. Zweitens versucht die Studie, die Faktoren für eine (nicht) erfolgreiche *Write for Rights*-Kampagne zu verstehen. Die Daten wurden durch die systematische Zusammenstellung von *Write for Rights* Kampagnenmaterialien und durch Experteninterviews gesammelt. Die Analyse ergab, dass der Schwerpunkt der *Write for Rights* Kampagne auf positiven Auswirkungen auf die Menschenrechte liegt, vor allem für Einzelpersonen. In den meisten Fällen werden Menschen,

die in der Menschenrechtsarbeit aktiv sind, für die Kampagne ausgewählt, und die Rechte, die verletzt werden, sind häufig ähnlich: z. Versammlungs- und Meinungsfreiheit. Die Auswirkungen von Write for Rights sind im Allgemeinen auf individueller Ebene zu verzeichnen, die Verbesserung der Situation der Fälle, was auch darauf zurückzuführen ist, dass die Kampagne als solche konzipiert ist und nicht versucht, politische Änderungen im Allgemeinen in Angriff zu nehmen.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“The Pen is mightier than the Sword” –

Edward Bulwer-Lytton 1839 Cardinal Richelieu

1.1. Introduction

“The pen is mightier than the sword” said Richelieu in a play by Edward Bulwer Lytton who wrote those lines for his character in 1839. Writing as a tool for communication has existed over years. As early as the eighteenth century, *The Letters of Junius*, which were published anonymously and addressed against the British government, provided an example of written protest in demand of human rights, by referring to “the rights of the people” (Hunt, 2007, p. 122). In the end of the nineteenth century, Émile Zola, an influential French writer at the time, had sent a well-known letter in response to the so called *Dreyfus affair*. After Dreyfus had wrongfully been accused of spying on the French, working for the German, Zola’s letter was published in 1898 in the newspaper L’Aurore. Not the letter alone, but in growing support for Dreyfus, a French Anti-Semitic League had formed. The letter titled “J’Accuse” is until today a celebrated op-ed letter. And up until today, despite the era of the internet and digitalization, the op-ed letter has remained a powerful tool in the political discourse, that people of interest and people known to the public make use of. Just in May this year (2019), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have joined forces to address the President of the European Council: Donald Tusk, taking advantage of their extensive power, impact and reach in an important matter regarding Libyan refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Amnesty International is no stranger to using letters of protest and appeal. Write for Rights was a campaign entirely based on writing letters inherently. With the onset of digitalization other forms of written protest have become integral to the campaign. In 2017, one of my university professors at the University of Wroclaw, Poland introduced us to the Write for Rights campaign. In class we collectively wrote letters of support and of appeal. Additionally, I worked with the German section of Amnesty International in the summer of 2018 in their Berlin Press Office. During this period, I was inquisitive about the impact campaigns have, the complex apparatus behind the preparation and implementation and the work behind the scenes.

As a student of Global Studies, I consider the topic relevant for my field because Amnesty International is a global human rights organization. This study allows me to analyze processes of globalization using the example of a global campaign. It also looks at processes which occurred in various regions of the world and which affect various groups of people inhabiting

these regions of the world. Further, this study falls under the broad issue of human rights which is a global concern and is relevant on an international level.

1.2. History of Amnesty International

The vision of Amnesty International today is “a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards” (Amnesty International UK, 2017). Richelieu’s mantra of “the pen is mightier than the sword” seems to be the underlying assumption and vision for Amnesty International’s campaign *Write for Rights*:

“Every December, supporters across the globe will write millions of letters for those whose basic human rights are being attacked [...] continuing a long tradition of writing letters to right some of the world’s biggest wrongs” (Amnesty International, 2019a).

The story of the human rights non-governmental organization (NGO) Amnesty International, dates back to the 1960s. In 1961, to be exact, Peter Benenson, a British lawyer, read about the case of two young Portuguese students who had been put in prison after “raising a toast for freedom” (Amnesty International, 2011). The incident found Benenson questioning why there is no action in support of political prisoners. He gathered “a group of like-minded lawyers and intellectuals” (Buchanan, 2002, p. 575), with whom he agreed to initiate an appeal for so called Prisoners of Conscience. The story of the two Portuguese students in mind, Benenson wrote an article. *The Forgotten Prisoner* was published by The Observer, a British newspaper, in May in 1961 before international newspapers republished the piece and the worldwide campaign *Appeal for Amnesty 1961* was launched. The appeal urged governments to give fair trial to defendants, or release people who are in prison for standing up for their personal views (Neier, 2012, p. 188). The response to the campaign was, in Amnesty’s words, “remarkable” (Amnesty International, 2011). It undeniably received tremendous support. A first meeting only eight weeks after launching the appeal concluded that it should be extended from one year to a long term appeal. In September 1961 the name Amnesty International was finally established.

Soon, the candle surrounded by barbed wire became the symbol of the movement. It represented the hope that “Amnesty International would shine light on the darkest of places where human rights abuses went unseen and unpunished” (Amnesty International, 2011). After a year, the organization became a registered charity in Britain. In 1964, only three years after the launch, the recognition at an international level was manifested by the United Nations with granting Amnesty International a consultative status. A year later, it gained the same

position at the Council of Europe. In the middle of the 1960s, the first releases of prisoners in East Germany, Ireland, and other countries showed initial success. The NGO also initiated the reports on specific countries around that time. Eventually, a research department was developed at the International Secretariat in London. In May 1965, the organization started gathering information of general and specific content and put them together in folders, including postcards and newsletters (Larsen, 1983, p. 34). In the beginning, prisoners of conscience had to be people who were not condoned or involved in acts of violence. The NGO also tried to balance the number of victims from different regions of the world, as well as from communist and non-communist regimes.

When the first international campaign, the Campaign on Abolition of Torture (CAT) was launched in 1972, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrated its 24th anniversary. CAT called for “an abolition of torture [...] across the world” (Amnesty International, 2011). The campaign’s strategy had three focus points: First, it aimed at producing reports to inform the public about torture and gain support. Second, it wanted to enhance the legal means to fight torture internationally. Amnesty launched a petition, that eventually one million people signed, that was sent to the then President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. And third, the campaign went along with the development of new ways and techniques to help victims (of torture). Despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was established and adopted in 1948, torture was not under international scrutiny in the 1970s, because Article 5 of the Declaration was not actively implemented (Clark, 2001, p. 38). Clark underlines Amnesty’s strong influence at the United Nations: “CAT pioneered a way for NGOs to become major players in setting the UN’s human rights agenda. [...] CAT is one of the most clearly documented examples of the positive impact of NGO activity on global norm emergence” (Clark, 2001, p. 54). As seen, the campaign on torture was a major driving force for the emergence and establishment of international norms regarding torture, and paved a way for future NGO impact at the United Nations.

While the initial focus on prisoners of conscience remained central, Amnesty International expanded its portfolio. Focusing on torture in the 1970s, the death penalty became a central topic in the 1980s. However, it was only in 1991 when Amnesty International put the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the core of its work. It pledged and committed to the protection and promotion of the rights enshrined in the Declaration. Towards the end of the 1980s, homosexuality as a topic came to the fore and the organization committed to adopting cases of people imprisoned due to homosexuality or homosexual acts as prisoners of conscience. Another change in the focus of its work was the decision to look at (quasi) non-governmental entities, such as guerilla groups. This opened Amnesty’s way to move away from a narrow

focus on states as the responsible entity. It also fostered the shift away from merely political and civil rights to a more inclusive portfolio, including social and economic rights. A campaign launched in 2009 called *Demand Dignity*, manifested the shift of focus towards a broader portfolio including economic and social issues. Demand Dignity looked at “human rights abuses that drive and deepen poverty” (Neier, 2012, p. 202). In 2007 Irene Khan (2001 – 2009), General Secretary at the time, underlined the development Amnesty underwent over the course of five decades. She pointed out that rather than focusing on individuals there is a need to work on “systematic change” (The Economist, 2007).

Certainly, a milestone in Amnesty International’s international recognition was the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, which the NGO was given for “having contributed to securing the ground for freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world” (Amnesty International, 2011). Only a year later, Amnesty International received the United Nations Human Rights prize for “outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection [...] of human rights and fundamental freedoms” (OHCHR, 2019). In the 1980s, the NGO took advantage of its wide recognition and was able to gain famous supporters and celebrities. With its international recognition, Amnesty International “became the prime example of a principal non-governmental organization, a key component of transnational advocacy networks and an exemplary transnational actor” (Hopgood, 2006, p. 3).

The organization also grew rapidly since its founding. Not only did it gain many members and supporters over the years, it also expanded its amount of cases adopted. In 1967 the organization claimed to have adopted over 2000 cases of prisoners in 63 countries. A report two years later documented the release of more than 2000 prisoners of conscience. Within the first 10 years it grew from a small number of volunteers to a global network with 18 sections that had 850 groups in more than 27 countries. Two decades after its founding, Amnesty passed the number of 250.000 members, subscribers, and supporters. In 1990, the network of supporters and members counted 700.000 people, “including more than 6000 volunteer groups in 70 countries” (Amnesty International, 2011). The magic mark of one million international members, subscribers, and supporters was eventually passed in 1992, and before the end of the twentieth century in 1999 it had further expanded to 1.8 million. Another decade later the mark was raised again counting three million in 2011 (Amnesty International, 2011).

1.3. Present day Amnesty International

Since Peter Benenson (1961 - 67), a number of General Secretaries have left their mark. The most recent change in the executive chair was when Salil Shetty (2010 – 2018) retired in 2018

after serving two terms. Kumi Naidoo was announced new Secretary General and took office in August 2018 (Amnesty International UK, 2018a). Simultaneously to the Secretary Generals changing, the tools and strategies of the organization have been adjusted over the years. In the beginnings, three cases from three different types of regimes were assigned to a group. To maintain a balance during the Cold War times, this included a communist, a non-communist, and in the Cold War times a non-aligned country. Also, no one was allowed to work on their country of origin. This separation eventually changed (Neier, 2012 p. 188). Since, Amnesty International has improved in size and professionalism. Today, there are huge national sections with professional offices. Designated departments within the national sections and the International Secretariat work together.

In 2011, Amnesty itself declared that the process of expanding its portfolio regarding topics and aspects of human rights is ongoing. Even after 60 years since the adoption of the Declaration of Human Rights the organization is still developing. In addition, Amnesty responds to contemporary crises such as political and humanitarian developments for example in Myanmar, Sudan, and Iraq. In the most recent report (2017-18), the organization shed light on current topics and countries. Next to Myanmar, Sudan, and Iraq, the NGO mentioned Yemen, Saudi-Arabia, and Syria – as all those countries are in particular precarious situations. Also, they underline the importance of an organization as themselves in a world where the implementation of human rights cannot be taken for granted (Amnesty International, 2018a).

The tactics Amnesty International uses, and that other NGOs also make use of, are public attention and pressure at the international level, musical concerts, celebrity appearances, and citizen support from around the world. The organization focuses on the advocacy of principles. According to Clark, the reason why Amnesty is able to apply pressure on governments and publicly challenge them, is the status it has “as a bystander with few resources except its principles, objectivity, and information. Those qualities also make [Amnesty International] an interesting, and unusual international actor” (Clark, 2001, p. 21). Clark also concludes that Amnesty’s independence and objectivity, which they explicitly established, put the NGO in the position it is in (Clark, 2001, p. 21). In addition, the organization’s unique selling point is the in-depth information and knowledge it has about individuals who suffer from human rights abuses.

One of the organization’s strong suits is the collection of reliable data on human rights abuses. Neier underlines that by saying: “Information is the lifeblood of the movement” (Neier, 2012, p. 3). The information and output Amnesty produces is often a foundation for further cross-national studies. The organization is not only considered a trustworthy source of reliable

information, but also enjoys a high reputation as brand (Ron et al., 2005, p. 559). The Annual Amnesty International Report has become an integral part of the organization's outputs over the years. According to Hopgood the NGO "gets to present itself as the preeminent authority in the modern human rights movement [...] There was a time when all we knew about 'human rights' in many parts of the world came through Amnesty, the Annual Report as the epitome of this pre-eminence" (Hopgood, 2010, p. 153). Since Amnesty is no longer the only source for information on human rights, the report's purpose according to Hopgood has shifted to rather holding the NGO accountable to what it has been claiming and doing (Hopgood, 2010, p. 153).

Up until today, Amnesty International remains donation based. The organization does not accept direct money from singular states. The biggest source of income remains the member contribution. Members donate or pay regularly to their national sections. A portion of that then goes to the International Secretariat in London (Neier, 2012, p. 196). In 2017, the organization raised 279 million € through donations (Amnesty International, 2017a). The way the organization is financed adds by large to its independence, which is one of the strongest powers the organization possesses. Amnesty as an organization has significantly improved its professionalism over the years. Nevertheless, the organization until today heavily relies on volunteers. Despite the establishment of a research office and the General Secretariat in London, as well as professionally set up national sections offices, volunteers and members lie at the core of Amnesty International.

Amnesty's areas of work, as of today, go beyond urgent actions and collecting donations. The organization is active in many ways including human rights education, hosting local Amnesty youth groups and meetings, providing legal support through foundations in various countries (Amnesty Germany for example founded: Stiftung Menschenrechte), and hosting lobby talks. Amnesty's mode of operation is split up into several main areas. More than 80 experts and researchers operate worldwide in more than 150 countries unveiling and reporting human rights abuses. The organization monitors and documents those and overall situations in countries and publishes more than 300 reports annually. Amnesty International calls itself a "global movement of more than seven million people who take injustice personally" (Amnesty International, 2019b). The NGOs' goal is to implement human rights for everyone that is the human rights as they are embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The organization's topics have changed from a specific focus on prisoners of conscience, expanding to the whole portfolio of human rights. The NGO itself claims to protect and empower people, covering a range "from abolishing the death penalty to protecting sexual and reproductive rights, from combating discrimination to defending refugees and migrants' rights" (Amnesty International, 2019b).

1.4. Organizational structure of Amnesty International:

In terms of structure, “the International Secretariat, overseen by the International Board, supports enables and implements the work and functioning of the movement” (Amnesty International, 2017b, p. 6). The International Secretariat has many responsibilities: it conducts research, provides campaigning materials for the national sections, and oversees the finances. Very important is that it ensures that the organization speaks with a united voice everywhere where it operates. The Secretariat therefore is the CEO and supervises the operations of the NGO. While the International Secretariat in London remains the base, regional offices in “cities in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East” (Amnesty International, 2019b) are investigative hubs, offer locations for campaigning and for communications.

At national levels with national sections established, Amnesty works in more than 70 countries worldwide with the national sections carrying out work at regional or national levels. They are on site and therefore able to lobby locally, focus on domestic campaigning, domestic media, support from within the country and their individual research. Local members’ first contact are the national sections. An even smaller entity than sections are the groups. Many of Amnesty’s members worldwide are active in groups: either through geographical unity or organized by schools or workplaces. As official Amnesty units, they carry out many of the activities introduced by the International Secretariat and the national sections. As the critiques of Amnesty in the second chapter will show, despite the recent organizational problems with work conditions, and the reaction caused by it, there is still an incredible amount of work that goes into the work of Amnesty International. One of their work pertains to the Write for Rights campaign.

1.5. Write for Rights: The Campaign

The Write for Rights campaign is Amnesty International’s global letter-writing campaign and, according to the organization, the world’s biggest human rights event. The aim of the handwritten letters, postcards, emails, and faxes against certain human rights abuses is to create awareness and to make the voices known in case of human rights violations. It banks on a long tradition of writing letters “to right some of the world’s biggest wrongs” (Amnesty International, 2019a).

The general procedure regarding cases adopted in the past was closely connected with the local groups. Staff gathered information about a new prisoner of conscience from a newspaper article or other news media sources, then assigned the case to an adoption group. The groups wrote letters to authorities or tried to generate publicity for the case, they raised money, and

they established contact with the prisoners themselves or with their family. The generating of publicity later resulted in the foundations for campaigns that focus on designated topics and aspects of human rights abuses. The research office in London was and is a crucial and central place where information is gathered. From there it started spreading information worldwide and shared it with the global community within and outside of Amnesty.

Amnesty International has established its possibly most-known format Urgent Action in 1973 (Amnesty International, 2011). When it was created, the core feature was that an Urgent Action could be set in motion quickly if there was reliable information, in order to help people that were tortured. Two years later, the Urgent Action Network was expanded to other areas. Its advantage was the quick response through the membership (a network of almost 80.000 people in 85 countries is part of the urgent action network (Amnesty International Germany, 2008)) compared to regular cases where a longer process was part of the common procedure. It has remained a tool used until today (Clark, 2001, pp. 46-48). Urgent Actions function through various types of communication, ranging from Tweets and Facebook posts to airmail to authorities (Amnesty International Germany, 2008).

Historically, the form of letter writing has always made sense as it was relatively cheap, simple, and easy. It does inherently not present problems for anybody based on their religion or background but can be used by people of every origin, ethnicity, or race. The technique of letter writing proved its resistance against concerns that were raised in the 1970s, that it did not have the same effect outside of the West. "Amnesty, in essence, developed and 'field tested' direct letter-writing networks and other tactics of transnational protest campaigns, tactics many other transnational activists now use against governments and business on behalf of the environment, labor practices, and other causes" (Clark, 2001, p. 9). Amnesty's organizing of letter-writing is demonstrated well with the widespread Write for Rights campaign which aims to have a double effect. First, governments and authorities are addressed hoping the campaign impact can convince them into policy changes. Second, solidary letters express support for human rights defenders all over the world.

The campaign was brought into being more than 15 years ago and has become bigger and bigger every year. Annually, Amnesty chooses several individuals, rarer also organizations that function as the figurehead cases of the campaign. These cases are then distributed globally and supporters all over the world participate in various ways. In 2001 it was brought to life by Amnesty activists in Poland. Inspired by a 24-hour letter writing event in Africa, a Polish local group initiated the campaign with a 24-hour writing marathon of Urgent Actions, an Amnesty original. The grassroots initiative quickly gained support from many national

sections and the campaign Writes for Rights was born as a new tool that became a reoccurring event. Since 2001, every November to December people gather globally and participate (Amnesty International Australia, 2017) with an official campaign start in 2002. With the International Human Rights Day on December 10th every year since the Universal Declaration was adopted in 1948, the campaign centers around a date that presents a good opportunity for generally raising awareness for human rights and combining the campaign with events that foster human rights education overall. The campaign mobilizes school students, university students, individuals, and of course Amnesty members to partake with letters, e-mails, and postcards. A lot of material provided by the organization focuses on using Write for Rights in a classroom or university setting and how to use the campaign for human rights education purposes. Letter-writing marathons are a major part of the campaign and gather millions of people worldwide in collective writing-events.

Amnesty generally proposes three ways in which people can participate in the campaign: writing a letter of solidarity, writing an appeal to a government official or somebody else in a position of power, and holding events. The first way of becoming part of Write for Rights relates to its roots, which is “writing to people who are wrongly punished, to show them that they’re not alone” (Amnesty International UK, 2018b). The organization offers a variety of resources with information on the cases so people can inform themselves and familiarize themselves with the situation the prisoner is in. Also, they supply address labels and message suggestions in case people are not sure what to write to the people that represent the cases in the campaign. They point out that the more personalized a message is, the more support the recipients seem to feel. Testimonies from many cases from the last 17 years have shown that solidarity messages do impact the targeted cases positively.

When writing appeal letters, the correct wording and address are crucial. The letters to people in authority are addressed to kings and queens, presidents, and heads of police, thus somebody who is in a position to “make change happen” (Amnesty International – Int. Secretariat, 2018). In the campaign booklet, the NGO offers appeal-address labels, pre-written letters to the local authorities or the government, and in general guides people through the process. The campaign booklet for the 2018 campaign underlines that if the case allows it, it is important to include the name and country of the sender, when writing appeal letters, because then the letter appears “genuine and personal” (Amnesty International UK, 2018c, p. 2). They also respond to frequently asked questions, one of them being whether the sender of a letter puts him- or herself in danger, for example being banned from the country they send the letter to. Amnesty explains, that they have no record of such incidents, however if someone is more comfortable with less information a first name and city would be sufficient as a sender.

The third option, hosting events is also explained and guided with a lot of information. Since the event is during winter time on the northern hemisphere, Amnesty UK suggests a variety of event options that are connected to “the season of goodwill: host a celebration with mulled wine, mince pies and all the trimmings, invite your local community to sign cards” (Amnesty International UK, 2018c, p. 18).

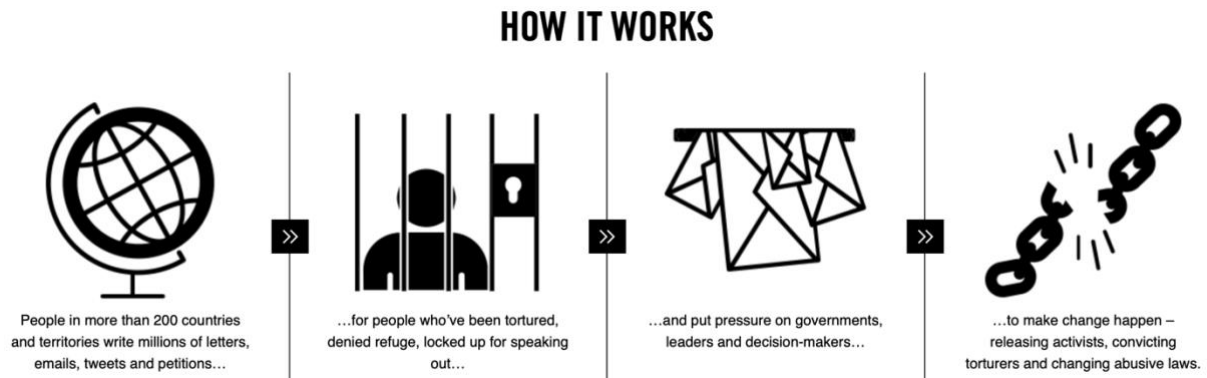


Figure 1: “How it Works” (Amnesty International, 2019d)

The campaign has developed several educational tools. One of them is designed to develop skills and competences which are an important part of the education process as a whole. the objectives of this learning tool are as following: “[...] understanding human rights [...]; [...] awareness of violations affecting people in different countries; [...] empower young people to act – not only on these cases, but in other instances as well; - to develop empathy and solidarity [...]; to develop literacy and communication skills – through discussion, analysis and letter writing; to understand the nature and the power of activism” (Amnesty International, 2015a, p. 3).

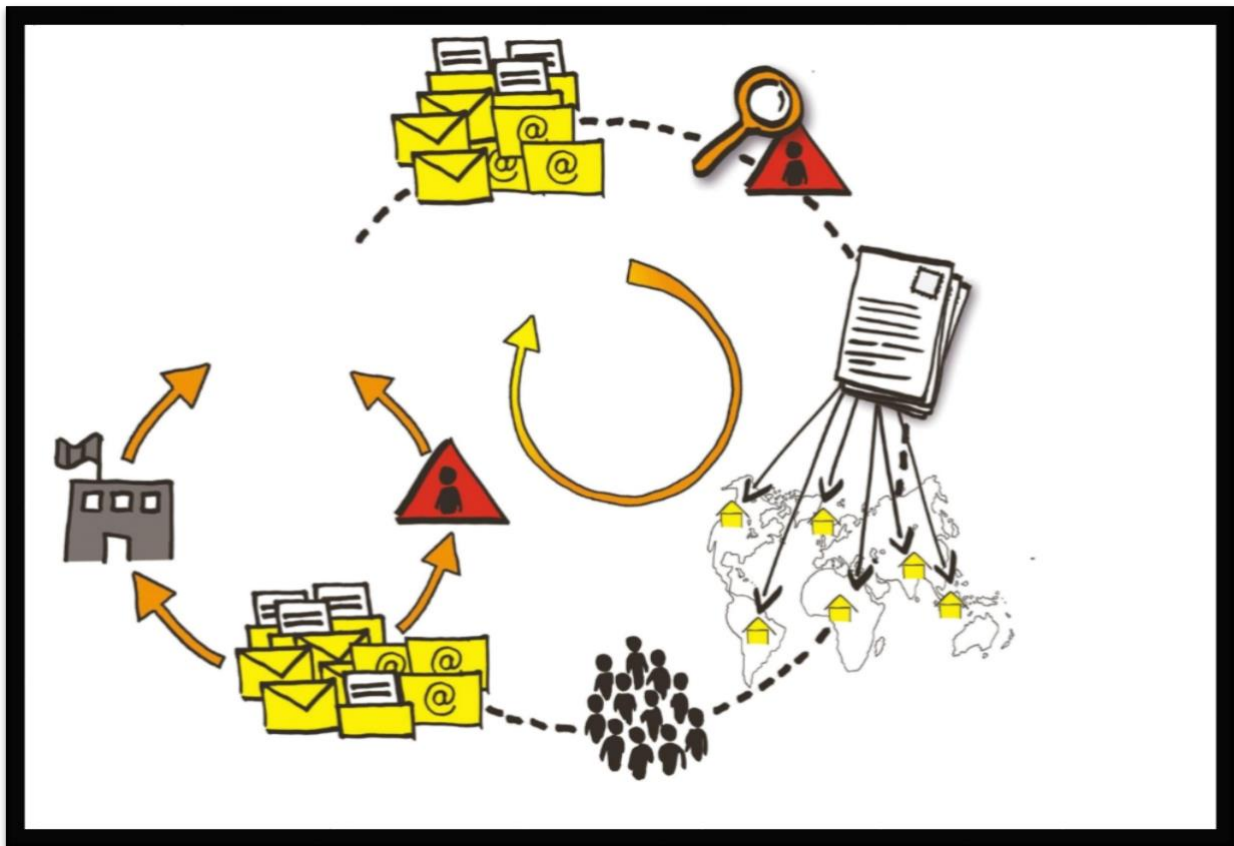


Figure 2: Infographics “How Write for Rights Works” (Amnesty International Canada, 2019)

Celebrating its 15th anniversary in 2017, Amnesty International was able to mobilize a total of more than 5.5 million actions taken within the campaign that year and gather a massive amount of supporters of human rights. (Amnesty International, 2018b). The campaign is “continuing a long tradition of writing letters to right some of the world’s biggest wrongs” (Amnesty International, 2019a). Protest via letter has existed for centuries as can be seen for black protest writing for example, which has existed since “the earliest literary efforts” (Muhammad, 2016). In the campaign booklet for 2018 the NGO points out that sending letters can make a difference whether it is an appeal or a message of solidarity. The close contact with the prisoners allows feedback and offers numerous examples of prisoners who have expressed their gratitude for the letters and postcards they were sent, making them feel supported and not forgotten, giving them strength. The US-American whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who was released in 2017 said: “I wish I had the time and ability to thank each one of you for giving me a little bit of joy with each letter and card” (Amnesty International – Int. Secretariat, 2018). In regards to appeal letters, Amnesty underlines that authorities receiving thousands of letters that all related to one specific case, “know that the world is watching them” (Amnesty International UK, 2018c, p. 19). Through raising “individual changes with decision-makers who can change the situation” (Amnesty International – Int. Secretariat, 2018) Amnesty does not only gather millions of people who flood the authorities with letters, but also attracts

international media attention by public actions and organized protests. The NGO states, that similar campaigns have already proven successful in the past: “Often there is a noticeable change by officials towards these individuals: charges are dropped, treatment becomes less harsh, and laws or regulations addressing the problem are introduced” (Amnesty International – Int. Secretariat, 2018).

1.6. Statement of the Problem

Undeniably, Amnesty International is one of the biggest – if not the biggest – and among the most influential international non-governmental organizations focusing on human rights. The organization is well known and its reach is extensive. The Write for Rights campaign has been going on since 2002 and has gathered enormous support over the years, demonstrating the amount of people the organization is able to mobilize. There are two problems that guide this study.

Firstly, there are very many success stories for this particular campaign. Amnesty International’s supporters were students, schoolkids, teachers, cleaners, market stallholders, and so many more. They took an unprecedented 5.5 million actions as part of Write for Rights 2017. Among them were carefully crafted letters, drawings and postcards. Their collective impact was undeniable. Nevertheless, all these stories are not mentioned in one place but rather fragmented pieces of (solid) information.

Secondly, the Write for Rights campaigns are created around chosen figureheads (often around 10 people or cases), but aims at also impacting the human rights situation in the country overall. There are often reports about the same human rights violations of other individuals who are not the target of the campaign, before and after, but also during the time the campaign is active. For instance, imprisonment of journalists in a particular country is not restricted to the figurehead whom the campaign supports. This leads to several points of inquiry with regard to the Write for Rights campaign. The mere set-up of the campaign inherently for me brought up the question whether such a campaign does not simply lead to successful isolated cases in which the respective government responds to the international pressure by releasing the person or improving the conditions of detention. This leads to the second problem of what factors influence choosing certain issues, groups and/or individuals for this campaign.

In response to the mentioned problem, with this study I propose and plan to carry out an exploratory study to understand the impact of the Write for Rights campaigns. This research is necessary, because it provides an insight for campaigners, human rights activists, and

researchers from the field. The results add to a body of knowledge about the impact of NGO campaigning and the theory of change.

1.7. Objectives

Based on the statement of the problem the following is the main objective of the study:

- To understand and explore the impact of a 'Write for Rights' campaign.

The sub-objectives are as follows:

- To collate information and analyze the Write for Rights campaign.
- To assess the factors leading to a (un)successful Write for Rights campaign.

1.8. State of the Art

A preliminary literature review indicates that there are several researches done about Amnesty International as an organization. In many social science disciplines, there are researches about campaigns as a tool for political strategies. There also several studies and reports about human rights abuses in countries. Some of the studies highlight naming and shaming campaigns of NGOs and that they have proven to be successful in the past (Savelsberg, 2015; Davis et al., 2012; Meernik et al., 2012; Hafner-Burton, 2008; Ron et al., 2005; Clark, 1998; Smith et al., 1998; Otto, 1996).

In a recent study in 2018, Amnesty International looks at eight stories of Not Enough Impact, where the organization celebrates the gains the movement made in the previous year (2017), and at the stories of the brave people that helped make them possible. At the same time, Amnesty International also took the opportunity to reflect on what is still to be done, and the people who persist in the face of injustice (Amnesty International, 2018c). The present study contributes to this report (Not Enough Impact) where it looks at the impact of the Write for Rights campaign. Providing the 'State of Art' provides an insight into the studies and reports relevant to understand the impact of Write for Rights campaign. In particular, on campaigns in the past, the history and culture of protest through the means of letters, and finally at the theory of change.

1.9. Research Methodology

In order to understand the impact of the Write For Rights campaigns on the human rights of countries, a qualitative research design was be used. This study relied on the theory of change to assess the impact of the campaign. It was carried out in two phases. In phase one, an analysis of the Write for Rights campaign was conducted. In phase two, experts were interviewed for a deeper understanding on issues related to the Write for Rights campaign.

The first set of data was analyzed by looking at recurring themes and emerging concerns based on my knowledge of the subject. The expert interviews were analyzed using Tesch's method (Tesch, 1990).

1.10. Chapterization

This thesis consists of five chapters. This first chapter provides a background to the study and its relevance within Global Studies. It further presents the history, present day organizational structure, and work of Amnesty International. It also provides a brief overview of the Write for Rights campaign. Based on this, it arrives at the problem that needs to be investigated thus stating the objectives of the study. It briefly describes the gaps in literature and the research methods. It also operationalizes certain key terms relevant for this study and states the scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter provides the state of the art in terms of the research that has already been carried out in the following areas: campaigns, theory of change, and the culture and history of letter protest. These three areas are chosen in order to understand the paths these campaigns have led and the learnings from it. It includes critiques of Amnesty International as well. Further it also looks at how this campaign contributes to the practicality of a theory of change.

The third chapter elaborates the research methodology. In particular, it discusses the research design and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. In addition, it also elaborates the research setting, sampling, data collection methods, instruments for data collections, and the data analysis methods. It briefly discusses the ethical aspects of the study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the study. Firstly, they present and interpret the data collected in the first sample. Secondly, the expert interviews are analyzed with Tesch's method and in relation to the theory of change. The final chapter provides a discussion on the data analysis and provides recommendations. It also highlights scope for future research, reflects on problems and limitations of this study.

1.11. Operationalization of Key Concepts

The following terms are operationalized for the purpose of the study:

Non-Governmental Organization: "A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is a non-profit organization of citizens that can operate locally, nationally, or internationally. Focusing on a specific goal, NGOs seek to perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, raise citizens' concerns with governments, and observe the political landscape. NGOs provide analysis and expertise and help to monitor and implement international conventions. Some

NGOs have been set up for very specific tasks, such as human rights, environment or health” (UNRIC n.d.).

NGO campaigns: According to Ralf Spiller, (NGO)-campaigns are “dramaturgically designed, thematically limited, time-limited communicative strategies for generating public attention, using a set of different communicative tools and techniques – advertising, marketing-specific and classical PR measures” (Spiller, 2018, p. 99).

Write for Rights campaign: The Write for Rights campaign is a campaign carried out by Amnesty International and its respective national sections. It was founded in 2001 and has since happened every year in December. Each year cases are picked for which people worldwide can write letters, post cards, and other forms of text, in order to support the causes proposed.

Human rights: “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination” (United Nations, n.d.).

1.12. The scope and limitations of the study

The scope of the study limits itself to the Write to Rights campaign through Amnesty International. There are several other organizations which carry out such campaigns. Further the data for Writes for Rights campaign limits the study to the information found on Amnesty International’s website. The scope only includes interviewing experts for understanding the campaign. Ideally, interviews with the figure heads of the campaign would have provided a different understanding. However this does not fall under the scope of the study. This is also due to the vast number of limitations. This is related to time limitation due to the study program. Further due to lack of funds, a more comprehensive study could not be undertaken. Nevertheless, this study provides a scope for further research topics in this area.

1.13. Conclusion

This first chapter sets the tone for the study by laying out the background of the topic with a rather detailed overview of Amnesty International’s history and the present day state of the organization. Its critiques and structure aid in understanding the many layers that come with choosing the case of an Amnesty International campaign. After the contextualization of the organization and their campaign Write for Rights, gaps in research are identified. This chapter

briefly explains the methodology by spelling out the research design, the process of data collection and data analysis. It further provides definitions of key terms, which are used in this study. After outlining the chapters, it concludes with a description of the limitations and the scope of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces the state of the art of this thesis, while focusing on the following three thematic aspects: campaigns, theory of change, and culture and history of letter protest culture.

2.1. Campaigns by NGOs

Campaigning in the context of international NGOs is part of the bigger picture of NGO communication, and the management thereof, overall. This section highlights campaigns in their various forms within the context of human rights issues and NGOs. The public relations work of NGOs in the twenty-first century is becoming increasingly professional. In the globalized world it is important for the organizations, to arrange their strategic communication professionally in order to be heard and seen. Schwarz and Fritsch forecast that the communication management of NGOs will become more important when looking at civil society actors in global politics (Schwarz & Fritsch, 2018, p. 361). Klein states that the bigger investments for communications and big campaigns are a results of a changing society (Dr. Klein et al., 2007, p. 2). Speth agrees that organizations respond to a need for more professional communication by re-allocating their budget and manpower (Speth, 2007, p. 18). Buchner however points out that even though big campaigns are usually expensive, the success naturally does not necessarily correlate with the money spent (Buchner et al., 2005, p. 36) According to Leipold, organizations focusing on campaigns do not only consider this form of communication as part of their resources but communication as the core of their work. He defines Amnesty International as one of the organizations which are first and foremost campaigning organizations (Leipold, 2000, p. 453). Meriläinen and Vos look at NGOs as agenda-setters. They argue that with globalization the environment in which NGOs as agents find themselves has changed. NGOs as agenda-setters need to restructure their outputs and are increasingly forced to update their (online) communication strategies (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 294).

Campaigns as a tool of NGOs are often looked at from a communication studies point of view. There are many books and handbooks highlighting successful ways of implementing NGO campaigns from a theoretical point of view, but also comparing big campaigns and assessing them. Campaigns are defined differently, depending on the approach and field the author comes from and applies. Spiller, from a communication-studies standpoint, breaks down campaigns as “dramaturgically designed, thematically limited, time-limited communicative strategies for generating public attention, that draw on a set of different communicative tools and techniques - advertising, marketing-specific and traditional PR” (Spiller, 2018, p. 99). Speth adds that campaigns are always about gaining trust and credibility, looking for supporters and approval. He argues that campaigns are “simply a special form of public

relations that is being used more and more frequently” (Speth, 2007, p. 21). Meriläinen and Vos say that “human rights organizations attempt to have their issues perceived as salient and worthy of attention” (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 297). They further state that “[M]edia and initiative campaigns can be used to increase public awareness and understanding of issues” (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 297). The authors further argue that “NGOs mainly derive power from public participation” (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 306) and that they are dependent on public participation in campaigns in order to get noticed by decision-makers. Cappella, with reference to communication campaigns, states that these “have long been accepted as a means for forming attitudes, increasing knowledge, and achieving social and behavioral change” (Cappella, 2003, p. 161).

Many authors agree, that campaigns are amongst the most important, if not the single most important tool and mode of communication organizations have, and that since the twenty-first century they have become increasingly important and professional (Bartels, 2018; Spiller, 2018; Leipold, 2000). With campaigns, organizations can achieve goals such as mobilizing the public, and putting pressure on governments (Spiller, 2018, p. 99). Similar to Spiller’s position, Barz compares several NGO campaigns and argues, that campaigning aims at reaching a big amount of a society. Barz adds that media publicity gives NGOs the platform of the public through which they can communicate their campaigns and that usually a mix of media is the choice of channel to distribute the campaign (Barz et al., 2018, p. 134).

According to Leipold, “[c]ampaign organisations, whose very reason for existence is to campaign, have existed for a long time” (Leipold, 2000, p. 453) calling Amnesty International one of the best-known modern examples. Bartels takes a look at how NGOs narrate themselves and the society they are in, and argues that campaigns “produce and reproduce social values and ideals” (Bartels, 2018, p. 115). NGOs push their political goals and agendas through lobbying, as another part of an NGOs communication. In order to be heard and recognized the NGO needs to find an access to power. According to Köhler, NGOs have to carry out political communication in order to achieve this access. He points out lobbying as one main strategy to do so, finding the needed recipient for the information the organization wants to spread and share (Köhler, 2018, p. 147 ff.).

2.1.1. Framework and process of campaigns

There are different types of campaigns, such as action campaigns, fundraising campaigns, or lobbying campaigns. However many, if not all big campaigns, do or may include all three aspects and are established around one key goal that creates spillover effects into the other areas. There are several studies that focus on the framework and set-up of campaigns. Bartz

underlines separate steps that include the concentration of the campaign versus the environment of a campaign. The latter is the foundation of the development of the campaign, building upon a problem analysis and defining goals and target groups. The concentration refers to finding a strategy, a combination of instruments and measures (Barz et al., 2018, p. 134).

Spiller introduces a similar order of steps in the campaigning process. Initially a topic is picked, the problem is analyzed, and then the target group is determined. Goals and strategies need to be fixed before the message is created accordingly. Finally the suitable channels are selected to distribute the message and spread the campaign. Spiller underlines that it is extremely important to budget and be efficient, and ultimately to get the timing right. He also stresses on considering the *zeitgeist* in order to actually reach the target audience (Spiller, 2018, p. 100, ff.) As Chapman and Fisher underline, the separate stages of a campaigning process are not linear but rather flexible. The different steps require action at different points in time and all of the stages are not necessarily subsequent. On top of that, steps might repeat themselves if campaigns are ongoing for a long time. The authors also point out that “the nature of campaigns is not straightforward” (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 154). Campaigns can run for long times and due to that blur the origins. They can also develop according to contemporary changes that make it necessary to adjust and respond. Most campaigns share that they are planned a significant amount ahead of time (Buchner et al., 2005, p. 39).

2.1.2. Picking an issue for a campaign

The stage of choosing a topic for a campaign is influenced by many factors. As Spiller underlines, NGOs need to consider the news value of a topic in order to achieve a successful response rate. This means the correct framing of the message is crucial for a campaign’s success. The framing also refers to the best way of engaging future supporters and gaining support for the cause and the NGO in general. A third part of framing is the message to the target country. With a successful frame the country will fear a threat to its legitimacy but most importantly its reputation. This way of addressing a target country and publicly calling it out is called *naming and shaming* (Spiller, 2018, p. 103).

2.1.3. Local or global campaigns

Taking a closer look at the stage of the campaign environment and target audience, the question whether working locally or globally comes up - of course some topics inherently will be the one or the other. Neier argues that for human rights organizations it is more beneficial to act globally. When calling out repressive regimes from within the country only the agent doing it makes itself vulnerable and might have to face reprisals. Globally acting organizations

can help by monitoring and operating from rather safe places but then supporting the people in the organization on site in the target country. "In this manner, the global organizations provide a measure of protection for national and local groups" (Neier, 2012, p. 11). Besides concerns about safety, the impact that local organizations have might be smaller, because governments can "readily ignore complaints from domestic rights monitors" (Neier, 2012, p. 11) because the freedom of press, for example, in the country is restricted. Lastly, acting globally enables organizations to benefit from a network of supporters, international media. According to Meriläinen and Vos, "NGOs may feel that societal change cannot be initiated at government level but only from the bottom up" (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 294). Neier however, does not neglect that local organizations have the advantage of being closer to victims, and underlines that sometimes the local focus is necessary. Nevertheless, the author concludes that "the main role of a global body is to validate the findings of national or local human rights organizations" (Neier, 2012, p. 12).

2.1.4. Strategies for campaigns

In terms of strategies, Spiller divides into two categories: Access and Voice strategy. The Access strategy, often also called insider strategy, is based on cooperation and offering solutions to an issue. An NGO provides policy papers and policy consultation, hoping it can cause change by giving options. In contrast the voice strategy, also known as outside strategy, focuses on generating influence on decision through mobilizing the public. This strategy is much more confrontational and emotional and relies on convincing people to become supporters. However, in practice, both approaches can work in an alternating manner, or even simultaneously (Spiller, 2018, p. 101 ff.). Choosing the correct method, or strategy, also depends on the financial means an organization has (Speth, 2007, p. 20). Leipold points out that "[c]ampaigning is a dialectical process, so campaigning organisations tend to be confrontational and in turn attract confrontational people" (Leipold, 2000, p. 453). Challenges for organizations in regards to campaigning can be other NGOs, who represent competition. However, Leipold argues that the competition is sometimes also beneficial because it can add to a generally higher awareness of the topic chosen (Leipold, 2000, p. 457).

2.1.5. Measuring campaign impacts and success

Once a campaign is successfully finished, the assessment and evaluation are big parts of the aftermath. One approach of looking at campaigns is through the lens of impact research, coming from communication studies. Different aspects looked at are the perception of the campaign, the importance of the topic of the campaign on an overall agenda, and whether a change of opinion and behavior was achieved (Spiller, 2018, p. 107). One goal of campaign is naturally to attract many people, and an easy calculation explains why: "The more people

NGOs can attract in support of their operations, the more power they may have in the eyes of decision makers” (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 295). Chapman and Fisher argue that a long lasting impact on policies is usually a rather “cumulative effect of campaigning over times which may lead to precipitative moments which have a major impact in terms of change in policy and practice” (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 155).

The National Contact Point (NPC) created a briefing in which they add to the research of how to measure campaign impacts. They identify two major branches of impact: policy change and influencing and behavior change. The latter refers to “mainly [...] influencing the attitudes, opinions and actions of ‘the public’ or specific groups through education and awareness-raising” (Thorne & Hestbaek, 2016, p. 1), while the first is about inside or outside tracks through which campaigns can be successful with lobbying, mobilizing public support, or appealing to decision makers. The NPC introduces a four pillar approach that builds on the theory of change, which is discussed later on in this chapter. In a second step, the NGOs need to prioritize what they would like to measure, meaning which aspects of the campaigns success or failure they want to look at. The third pillar is choosing a level of evidence “that is proportionate to the size of your campaign and for which you can realistically collect data” (Thorne & Hestbaek, 2016, p. 1). The authors suggest different types of evidence, dividing into two main types: tracing *the extent* to which the change has happened versus tracking *how* the change has happened. The extent itself can be measured through quantitative methods, while qualitative methods help when looking at how the campaign generated change or not. In a fourth step, the NGO needs to pick their sources and tools, referring to for example questionnaires, content analyses, or interviews (Thorne & Hestbaek, 2016).

Chapman and Fisher looked at two campaigns in the end of the 1990s. Even though they did not pick an Amnesty campaign, their findings relate well to the campaign looked at in this paper, as *Write for Rights* picks specific cases with a face and a name to them. In their general results they argue that “[a]n effective campaign is based on stories and the extent to which these are accepted by different parties. Heroes or heroines are created whose actions and exploits become mythologised, and so serve to motivate supporters” (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 155).

Interesting is how many authors (e.g. Chapman & Fisher, 2000) argue for cooperation and linking up of NGOs because it is an effective way to join forces and combine powers. However, Amnesty International in this specific case – but also in general most of the times – is a successful agent by its own, having gained credibility and prestige over years of work. There is little to no cooperation visible in Amnesty’s campaign work. Chapman and Fisher underline that in order to achieve the final change and impact desired an involvement of the government

and/ or the law is necessary (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 161). In the case of this thesis, this means when looking at the impact of *Write for Rights* on the human rights implantation besides the specific cases in the campaign, an action taken by the respective government is expected when a positive outcome did happen. If the campaign's success spilled over from one single flagship case to an improvement of the human rights practice overall, evidence of the governments' response should be found.

Chapman and Fisher also bring up international conventions as ways of holding the governments accountable. An improvement of implementing a previously signed or ratified convention or newly signing or ratifying one could therefore be another way of proving a positive impact. Nevertheless, policies on paper alone are not what impact is proven by, as they can be a way of only in theory representing improvement while the reality is in contrast to it. The authors conclude their study with pointing out that "[c]hanges in policy are not enough to ensure implementation and change at the grassroots; this requires additional activity such as monitoring, the use of appropriate tools, and also long-term project work" (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 164).

In 2003, Coffman looked at how to evaluate communication campaigns, more specifically at policy change campaigns. She underlines that they have been used increasingly in contrast despite still being looked at less than individual behavior change campaigns. The strategic steps of these campaigns follow a clear pattern: identify policy makers who are in power positions, work out the target group for their campaign, namely the audience that can be mobilized in order to pressure the policy makers. In a last step the target audience is addressed with messages that bring the policy change forward (Coffman, 2003, p. 6 -7).

Along with Coffman's research, Stachowiak's study which looks at "theories to inform advocacy and policy change efforts" (2013) adds to the body of knowledge on how to use theory of change in campaigns. The theoretic foundation for this approach is that power is "not something exclusively held by elites" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 20), but can change and remains dynamic. The theory argues that grassroots movements are able to push for social change by mutually taking action. As a result from the assumptions of power being dynamic and having a change to organize social change, Stachowiak concludes that "[a]dvocacy efforts are focused on working with the many, not the few" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 20), meaning it is necessary to mobilize the masses.

2.2. Amnesty International and Campaigning

According to Amnesty International, a campaign is “an organized course of action to achieve change” (Amnesty International Publications, 2002, p. 17). Leipold defines Amnesty International as a campaigning organization. By definition, letter-writing is part of a number of direct appeals that Amnesty International uses. The campaigning Amnesty uses comes in a variety of forms: besides direct appeals, the organization uses human rights education and public demonstrations to raise awareness, mobilize the public but also to pressure governments that are guilty of human rights abuses. The organization defines a campaign further as “a large-scale, coordinated effort by sections, groups and networks in many countries, using a broad spectrum of techniques around specific objectives” (Amnesty International Publications, 2002, p. 18). Just like Write for Rights, there are some campaigns that are ongoing, while others are newly developed and implemented for a certain time frame.

2.2.1. Credibility of Amnesty International

A trademark of Amnesty’s work is the detailed and thorough research the organization conducts. In the London office, where all the research comes together, information and news about all kinds of human rights abuses are verified before using that knowledge to write reports. The organization draws upon years of experience, know-how, and well established structures that allow to carry out research to such an extent. Also, the organization has worked for many decades and was able to create a high level of credibility for news media, journalists, and politics. The reports and the researched numbers and data in general add to a solid foundation for Amnesty’s campaigning. The credibility the organization has achieved is also supporting its successful campaigning. Governments that fear to be publicly named and shamed, and feel their reputation threatened can be pressured by Amnesty through the rapid alert system of Urgent Actions or can be targeted through long-term campaigns (Buchner et al., 2005, p. 79).

In a study from 2011, Meriläinen and Vos evaluated Amnesty Finland’s online communication. In one of their expert interviews, an Amnesty International Finland Executive Director argued that “the NGO’s power comes from combining Amnesty’s weight or legitimacy, and its civil activism” (Meriläinen & Vos, 2011, p. 305). The interviewees also stated that Amnesty is well prepared in order to meet their own expectations.

2.2.2. Campaigning – Amnesty International: A campaigning organization

Amnesty International released a campaign manual in 2001 that has yet to be updated as they had announced. The organization itself claims letter-writing to be “the campaigning technique that is most associated with [them]” (Amnesty International, 2001, p. 113). The manual makes a difference between campaigns that need a big amount of letters, versus others for which the

quality of each letter matters. When letters add up to a big amount they can demonstrate the level of awareness and the support for the concern Amnesty is trying to raise.

Amnesty International has a long history of writing letters – especially being founded before the internet as a place of mass distribution. Also, it was mentioned that there are varying purposes of letters: while some are supposed to express support and sympathy for a person imprisoned, others simply aim at appealing to the authorities. Generally, the latter most often tries to impress by the mere quantity of participants, rather than by a deep and meaningful content (as long as the main message is conveyed). Amnesty's protest culture has developed over the years. The Urgent Action network demonstrates how early on the NGO found ways of quick responses and massive participation. Petitions in general "have a tradition in public protest that goes back many centuries" (Amnesty International, 2001, p. 119). Petitions are useful tools for gathering groups for joint activities, and they are cheap and fairly easy to organize.

The manual also talks about the disadvantages of letter-writing. Due to Amnesty being such a frequent user of the technique there is a risk of governments getting used to it being able to successfully counter it. However, it is suggested that through variety this can easily be avoided, meaning it is always possible to change the explicit recipient, or get started on follow-up letters. This also leads to the question who normally receives letters from Amnesty: the manual states that a "standard AI letter [...] is addressed to a named government official in another country" (Amnesty International, 2001, p. 114). Next to that standard letter, there are plenty of other options of letters being sent to military commanders, other people in charge and power, but also to the victims and their families.

Among the advantages of letter-writing is the low cost, that it is simple in organization, flexible, and an accessible way for people to show their support. In a campaign such as Write for Rights the first letters will be recognized by government officials regarding the content, whereas the following will only add to the quantity as it is soon obvious they are all part of a campaign – "the total number illustrating the level of concerns" (Amnesty International, 2001 p. 118). According to Buchner, around half of all releases of prisoners of conscience are due to letter-writing campaigns (Buchner et al., 2005, p. 83).

2.2.3. Critiques of Amnesty International

Despite the consistent and reliable work and the overall seemingly good reputation, there has always been several critiques to this organization. A recent report published in February 2019 by the KonTerra Group questioned the working culture of the organization. It documented

alarming working conditions at the International Secretariat in London, questioning the implementation of human rights at the Secretariat itself as workplace and caused a lot of negative media echo (McVeigh, 2019a; The KonTerra Group, 2019). Following an employee's death, the organization issued the report as a measure of reviewing the well-being of the Amnesty staff. The present Secretary issued a public statement in response to the alarming results: "[...] [W]e have been acutely aware of the seriousness of the internal issues at the International Secretariat. It now is time to move on. [...] With the increasing pressure on human rights defenders globally, Amnesty International needs to be stronger and more effective than it has ever been, and our resolve and fortitude must start from within" (Amnesty International, 2019c). Notwithstanding these reports, Amnesty International still enjoys a reputation of being a credible source for reports, based on many years of putting forward work.

Hopgood argues, that Amnesty's strength lies in its ability to put a face on the case, which enables people all over the world to feel and see for themselves. This is especially useful since the meaning of human rights is not "self-evident" (Hopgood, 2006, p. 73). Nevertheless, in contrast, the organization decided in 1996 to avoid emotional or abusive language in their literature and output produced. One core principle Amnesty International always followed is to be politically impartial. The organization has committed, and still is, to adopt cases of human rights violations regardless of the victim's views, religion, or political affiliation, and regardless of the ideology of the respective country's government. Another core principle is universality: "open to all, concerned with all" (Hopgood, 2006, p. 208). However, Hopgood also argues this universality bares difficult consequences. As an NGO, with limited resources, there is always a need for selecting and sort of almost ranking abuses, because at the end of the day decisions have to be made who to prioritize. An interviewee, a senior manager, concludes that "selection is inevitable" (Hopgood, 2006, p. 211). A strong suit, and also trademark of Amnesty's work, is the focus on individuals in spite of big numbers of victims. Putting faces and names of individuals on the story, underlines the humanity and importance of each individual and helps to make sense of the massive human rights abuses - the victims are more than numbers, they are people. As Neier points out the supporters of the organization "are united by their commitment to promote fundamental human rights for all, everywhere" (Neier, 2012, p. 1).

A critique that Amnesty International generally has to face often circles around accusations of a lack of diversity, being Western-centric, and male-dominated. A recent case in India dealt with "allegations of caste discrimination and harassment within the organisation" (McVeigh, 2019b). It resulted in "prominent Indian rights activists withdr[awing] their support for Amnesty India" (McVeigh, 2019b). Hopgood considers the integration of gender, race, and difference failed and concludes that it is an organization mostly run by Western white middle-class men

(Hopgood, 2006, p. xi). Neier however refutes this argument by pointing out Amnesty's diversity in regards to working everywhere in the world today, including all regions. On top of that, she argues that the NGO focuses on "matters that are universally recognized as core human rights concerns" (Neier, 2012, p. 6). She nevertheless does list a small number of exceptions including the, according to the author, most repressive regimes: Burma, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, and Turkmenistan (Neier, 2012, p. 6). Those countries do not allow organizations like Amnesty International to operate at all or at least not easily. This weakens her own argument of Amnesty working everywhere in the world today, yet the work on universal matters still applies. Further, Hopgood argues, the NGO "is strongly defined by the system of sovereign nation-states. Members are organized into national sections [...]" (Hopgood, 2006, p. 24).

Also Mutua critiques of Amnesty International and other international organizations. In his article from 2001, he looks at the narrative of human rights and the work around it as three dimensional compound metaphor: the savages-victims-savior (SVS) construction. This construction depicts "an epochal contest pitting savages, on the one hand, against victims and saviors, on the other" (Mutua, 2001, p. 201). He argues that mostly Western organizations such as the United Nations and international human rights NGOs but also dominant authors in the sphere of human rights and academia constructed this metaphor, creating an idea of good versus evil. According to Mutua this notion also derives from a Eurocentric human rights corpus, painting the European countries the saviors who fight the not-European countries the savages against which they have to fight. The victims are people in those countries who are portrayed as helpless, innocent, powerless, and in need for saving because they are considered unable to help themselves. Mutua asks the human rights movement to abandon the SVS metaphor in order to achieve a "genuine international discourse on rights" (Mutua, 2001, p. 243).

2.3. History and Culture of Public (Letter) Protest

The culture of writing letters of appeal or solidarity was not just born with Amnesty International: the predecessors are manifold.

2.3.1. Origin

One can assume that the history of letter writing as a means of protest or activism went back to the time language and writing was institutionalized. There are early accounts of letters being sent to newspapers as early as the nineteenth century (1898: Émile Zola's letter "J'accuse", mentioned in the introduction) as a means of voicing concerns (Hunt, 2007, p. 122).

And the history of letter protest - and protest writing in general - continues to be written. Muhammad finds elements of modern protest writing at the award show for the US-American *Grammy's* in 2016, when Kendrick Lamar, a black US-American rapper performed part of his new album. She relates his performance with classical black protest writing and its most famous representatives: W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin. She links Lamar's performance with Du Bois' essay *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), by underlining: "the overarching connection is the protest of wrong committed upon a people, and the call to rectify those injustices" (Muhammad, 2016). She underlines that Lamar performs with the same messages today, as Du Bois was at the beginning of the twentieth century, because the injustices remain. In general, (black) protest writing is as old as "the earliest literary efforts" (Muhammad, 2016). Since then, black protest writers have been in dialogue with each other across generations that passed up centuries.

This relates to protest culture overall: as long as injustices remain in the world (whether they be subjective or objective), a form of protest will resist. Carosone, in a Huffington Post article from 2017, refers to written protest as "political acts of survival" (Carosone, 2017). He argues that writing is political by rebelling, protesting, and by adding to history. He also argues that it can be therapeutic for people, especially drawing on examples from sexual minorities and people who are experiencing discrimination based on their sexual orientation. Relating his thoughts to Amnesty's claims about the Write for Rights campaign, they share the belief that "writing can change and improve the world: the consistent injustices in the world" (Carosone, 2017).

An example of US-American letter protest writing is the story of a magazine being flooded with extreme patriotic responses to a story published, after a political organization had instructed to do so. In McEvoy's analysis from 1967, the author analyzed the letters according to a number of factors in order to gain knowledge about the letter writers themselves and their background. (He also assessed whether the people wrote in relation to the organization initiating the response or not). Without going into detail, the conclusion of the case study is showing that, whether people were motivated by the instruction or whether they simply wanted to express their disfavor, they grabbed a piece of paper and a pen and sat down to write out of protest (Mc Evoy et al., 1967, pp. 455 – 463).

2.3.2. Social movements and letter-writing

Regarding social movements, Earl and Kimport looked at targets of online protest in 2008. The authors underline in the beginning that online protest is an understudied area. In their study they look at online petitions, boycotts, letter-writing, and e-mail writing campaigns, also looking

at state versus non-state actors being addresses through that protest. They assign a growing importance to the “role and effects of non-state actors in protest control” (Earl & Kimport, 2008, p. 449). They demonstrate examples of letter writing campaigns of the past:

“Activists have often registered their dissent through letter-writing campaigns. In 1931, for example, the sentencing of the Scottsboro Boys sparked a wave of action around the world (The Scottsboro Boys were nine African American teenagers, ages 13 to 20, falsely accused in Alabama of raping two white women on a train in 1931). Members of the international communist movement mounted a coordinated letter-writing campaign, which the mother of the Scottsboro boys credited as having saved her sons (Miller et al. 2001). While not all letter-writing campaigns are successful (e.g. Krieger 1971), they have nonetheless been used widely by social movement actors as a protest tactic. Email campaigns represent one way in which the tradition of letter-writing campaigns has been imported into the world of online activism, and letter-writing campaigns themselves have also moved online” (Earl & Kimport, 2008, p. 452).

Interestingly, their results show, that a small but relevant amount of online protest actually targets non-state actors. They further argue that e-mail campaigns are the twenty-first century adaption of letter-writing, however I find that not applicable in Amnesty’s case, where still a significant amount of protest is conducted on paper. Nevertheless also in the Write for Rights campaigns developments over the years it becomes evident that more electronic types of communication are added to the campaign.

2.4. Theory of Change

Theory of change is a rather modern term that evolved in the 1990s around the area of program evaluation and evaluation theory. It originated in the United States in the “field of communication initiatives” (Stein & Valters, 2012, p. 3). Predecessors from the 1970s ongoing, were logic planning models. The possibly most know one: the logical framework approach. To some degree the term theory of change is contested, since it has several definitions. For this study some of the approaches and views are presented to underline the similarities and the understanding that is repeated and shared by several authors. Stein and Valters sum up the common understanding that can often be found as “an articulation of how and why a given intervention will lead to a specific change” (Stein & Valters, 2012, p. 2).

According to the Stiftung Zewo, there is the method, or the process of a theory of change, which refers to a systematic project planning and a second meaning of the term that refers to the product of the process, a more specific impact model. Further, the Stiftung Zewo argues

that the foundation of the process of theory of change is to understand what preconditions are necessary in order to achieve main goals. The preconditions and goals are mapped out and measured with tailored indicators and designated activities, that need to be done (Stiftung Zewo, n.d.).

Another definition, by Mackinnon (2006) refers to theory of change as a process of change which is mapped “from beginning to end” (Mackinnon et. al., 2006, p. 1) and by that “establishes a blueprint for the work ahead and anticipates its likely effects” (Mackinnon et. al., 2006, p. 1). Further, the author emphasizes the connection to evaluation and how the theory of change discloses how and when to evaluate what.

2.4.1. United Nations and Theory of Change

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) explains ‘theory of change’ on “how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts. It can be developed for any level of intervention - an event, a project, a programme, a policy, a strategy or an organization” (Rogers, 2014, p. 1). UNICEF also introduces the idea of a flow chart by referring to a “results chain” that connects inputs with outputs and outcomes with impacts. UNICEF uses the theory of change for strategic or for policy planning in order to analyze needs but also opportunities. Using this process helps the organization to “design more realistic goals, clarify accountabilities and establish a common understanding of the strategies to be used to achieve goals” (Rogers, 2014, p. 2). On the other hand, it can also be used to explain to partners and staff how a designated program or project works. Rogers further emphasizes the usefulness for impact evaluations, underlining that “a theory of change is useful for identifying the data that need to be collected and how they should be analysed” (Rogers, 2014, p. 3). UNICEF’s theory of change looks at several topics, always following the same order of steps: first they look at the context of the topic, the assess assumptions and risk, before evaluating key partnerships (UNICEF, 2017).

Interestingly, different UN institutions use varying definitions of a theory of change. In the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Group’s Campaign Guidance the following definition is used: “A theory of change is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, are expected to lead to a specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence” (UNDAF, 2017, p. 4), they add that “[it] must be driven by sound analyses, consultation with key stakeholders and learning on what works and what does not in diverse contexts drawn from the experiences of the UN and its partners” (UNDAF, 2017, p. 4). The UNDAF uses the theory of change to find solutions to situations where progress is hindered or where decisions need guidance. The context in which

UNDAF takes advantage of a theory of change could be looking at development challenges programs and policies.

2.4.2. Visualization of Theory of Change

A theory of change is often portrayed in one of the various types of flow charts or diagrams with no limits in getting creative and at times also complicated. This can be seen when comparing governmental organizations', institutions', and NGOs' theories of change and how they are visualized. Some also prefer the terminology of problem tree and solution tree (this can be part of the bigger flow chart, or an intermediate step). Often, the process is a working backwards from first figuring out the ultimate goal, and then asking what is needed to end up at that goal.

An example for a complex flow chart can be seen here:

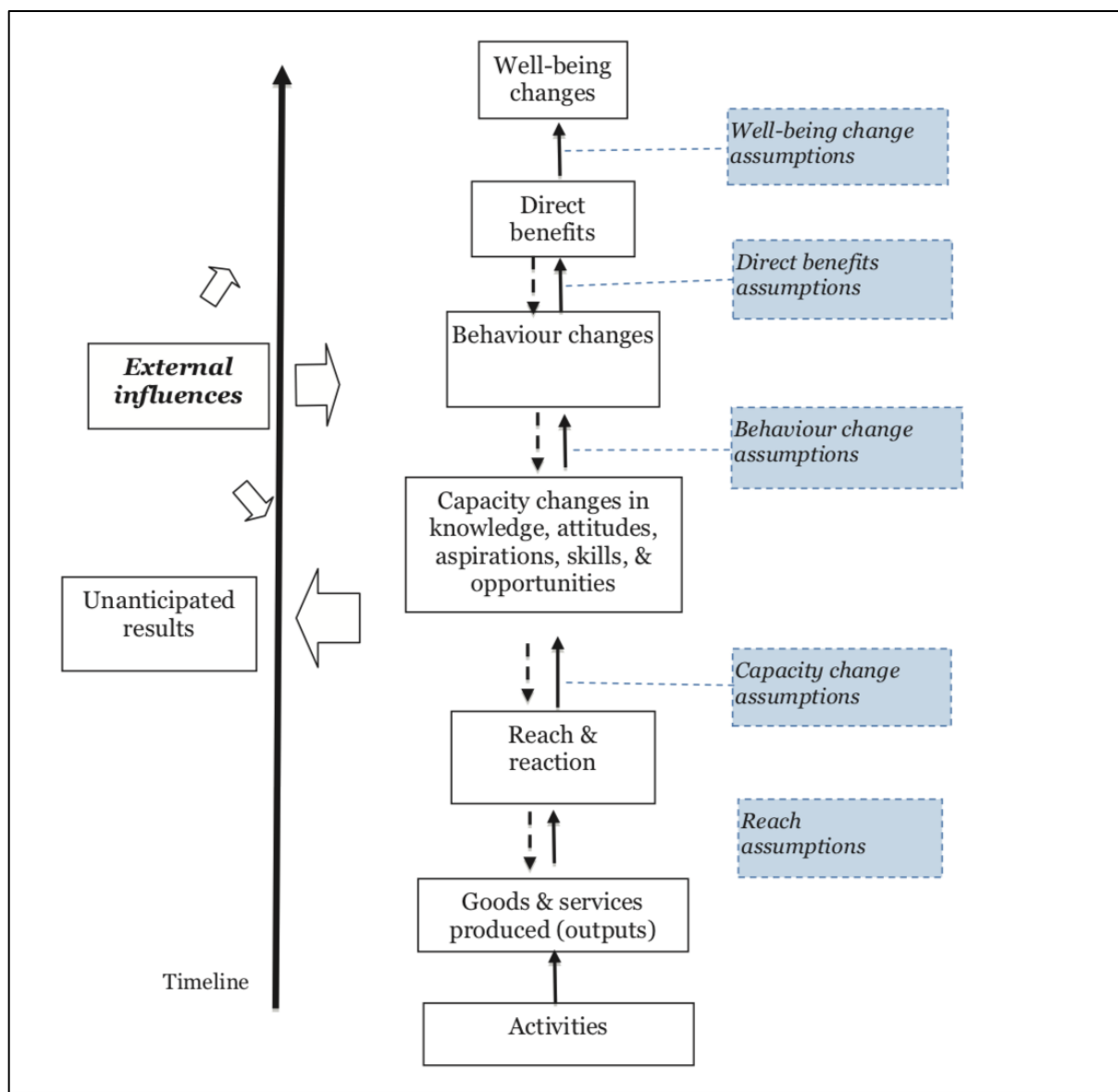


Figure 3: *Theory of Change* (Mayne 2015)

2.4.3. Usage and Development of a Theory of Change

Many types of change are connected with the theory of change: social change (Mackinnon et. al., 2006, p. 2) and societal transformation are just two to mention here (Our WATch, 2014, p. 3). Also, there are many different and diverse areas where a theory of change can be put to use, such as campaign assessment, policy evaluations and interventions, legal and regulatory settings, developing frameworks, and improving companies or organizations overall. The type of change can vary from root causes, through individual change to institutional development. Ideally, a variety of actors are involved, most importantly the people affected, but also experts, outsiders, staff from various levels of hierarchy, and so on. Same goes for the information used in the process. It can and should include previous documents of evaluation, opinions, and more generally speaking apply a mixed-method approach with using qualitative and quantitative data.

When mapping out the steps in developing a theory of change, again many different approaches and procedures can be found. Many include a first step of “situation analysis”, or in other words a problem analysis. In a next step, it will be clarified which aspects are relevant to be looked at and addressed, in other words what is needed. According to NPC, “it shows you what you want to achieve and how you plan to achieve it, setting out the causal links between your activities and your end goal” (Kazimirski & Pritchard, 2014, p. 11). The authors underline the need to prioritize the data that will be looked at, when choosing what to measure.

A simple flow chart to describe the process of developing a theory of change generally can look like this:

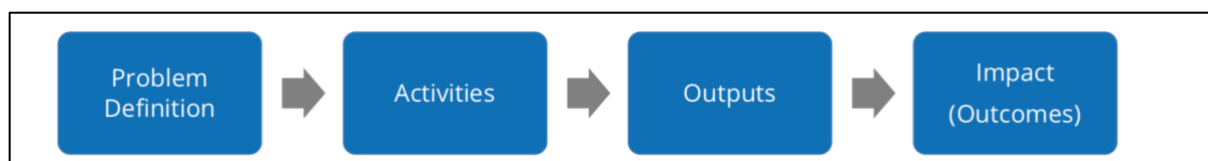


Figure 4: *Theory of Change (Innovations for Poverty Actions 2016)*

Key terms that most NGOs, international organizations, and other institutions share when talking about or using a theory of change are: assumptions, preconditions, and interventions. Inherent to the including assumptions are “If ... then...” statements that many authors mention (Stein & Valters, 2012, p. 4; Our WATch, 2014, p. 3, UNDAF, 2017, p. 8). The “If ... then” statement allows for assumptions to be made explicit. Also, the assumptions go along with looking at possible risks, as intended in the “If... When” clause. Assessing the risks and assumptions is the second step in the process of developing the theory.

Looking at intermediate goals and outcomes before evaluating or working on long term and main goals is another step in the process. According to Our WATch, the early and intermediate

results even “[set] the stage for producing long-range results” (Our WATch, 2014, p. 3). Looking at intermediate outcomes also goes along with trying to eventually tackle the root causes of problems. Together with looking at assumptions and risks, the intermediate analysis should help to identify what partners and actors are needed, or not. Further, it shows the links between the intermediate and the final goals (Kazimirski & Pritchard, 2014, p. 12). This step includes prioritizing what will be measured, meaning what data to collect. Then it is necessary to include stakeholders in the process and based on them to choose how strict the evidence needs to be.

Lastly, the theory of change fosters a process of improving the situation at the time, and map out a process that moves further towards the desired situation: triggering change. The last step can also be considered a form of evaluation and learning, ideally taking away something from it. The evaluation of the theory of change process needs to be continuous in order to guide future work with the intermediate results.

2.4.4. Contextualizing Theory of Change in Amnesty International’s work

The study conducted by Our WATch in 2014 looks at domestic violence in Australia. Despite a much focused topic, that does not relate to Amnesty’s work overall, there are some interesting parallels. Our WATch worked out a number of underlying principles. One of them is that “change comes from identifying and addressing the root causes of a problem” (Our WATch, 2014, p. 6). They argue for a need for studies and key factor analysis to understand the bottom of an issue. On top of that, the organization points out that there are different approaches needed at the different levels of change such as institutional versus local or community level. In the Amnesty context this is interesting when looking at the Write for Rights campaign because it does specify the types of letters: appeal letters to address the government versus letters of support for the victims of human rights abuses. I argue, that two types of change could follow here: For once, the obvious improvement of the situation of the person. Secondly, regardless of improvement of the situation, the (emotional) personal condition of the person affected could change. Another principle that can also be applied to Amnesty is using “activities that reinforce each other” (Our WATch, 2014, p. 9). This can be adapted to Amnesty and seen in the way they address the targeted people not only within the Write for Rights campaign but also beyond that, with Urgent Actions or within other campaigns prior and later.

According to Gready (2017), “theories of change are virtually non-existent” (Gready, 2017, p. 2) in human rights. Fagligt Fokus agrees that the development sector is only now seeing an increased use of theories of change (Fagligt Fokus, 2015, p. 5). However, that argument can

be easily refuted by simply looking at organizations such as Amnesty International, or CARE, who have already put together their theories of change. Nevertheless, the organization adds an interesting perspective when comparing development and human rights actors. They argue, that human rights organizations are less dependent on government than development organizations are, because the latter often cooperate with governments. Further, Gready underlines that law has different priorities in theories of change of human rights and development actors. In human rights, law can be considered “a potential leverage for change” (Gready, 2017, p. 2). One last point they make unites both actors: human rights and development agents. The organization argues that there is a need to realize that the problems tackled are often very complex and therefore “require complex interventions and solutions” (Gready, 2017, p. 3).

As mentioned, CARE International, just like other (human rights) NGOs has already put together a theory of change in 2012. They initially argue that theories of change can increase the “quality of peacebuilding” (CARE, 2012, p. 2) at a rather low cost. Among CARE’s key findings was the fact that partners need to be appropriate rather than easy-to-reach. During a study that the NGO conducted, they reviewed a total of 38 theories of change within a project of more than two years. Next to finding the appropriate partners and actors, they concluded that a correct theory of change “fosters collaboration between agencies and avoids duplications” (CARE, 2012, p. 8). It also seems to have significant impact on managing finances efficiently by realizing which activities are inefficient and by assessing their relevance. Overall, they argue that it “enables better programme focus” (CARE, 2012, p. 2) and provides increased transparency, something the Amnesty International could also take advantage of.

2.4.5. Effective use of Theory of Change

In 2011, Klugman looked at how to effectively use social justice advocacy by relying on a theory of change framework (Klugman, 2011, pp. 146 – 162). First, she introduces the concept of social justice advocacy:

it “describes efforts to a) increase fairness in the distribution of resources; b) end discrimination against all groups, fostering values that recognize all people as equal; and c) promote the participation of people in policy and implementation processes that affect their lives, and transparency and accountability for how decisions are made and how they impact on society” (Klugman, 2011, p 147).

Klugman’s article is interesting because she introduces the idea of multiple streams that problems and their solutions follow, which creates a demand for an analysis of problem

recognition in the political domain. She proposes using a theory of change in order to make problems visible on the agenda of decision-makers. The so called “policy activists” are the executors of that task, often turning to the public to gain more attention for their cause. An ideal outcome of the advocacy process is an improvement of policies (Klugman, 2011).

2.5. State of the Art

This section discusses the research that has already been conducted on NGO influence on governments in general. There are quite a number of studies done in this area. There are studies on the influence of environmental organizations, global governance; civil societies; naming and shaming campaigns; negative impacts of Amnesty International; advocacy networks and human rights norms implementation. Finally this section identifies the gaps in the literature and highlights how these gaps pave way for this study.

2.5.1. Influence of environmental NGOs

The impact and the influence of environmental NGOs, and the influence of NGOs in general on the agenda of environmental issues is an issue that has been studied significantly. In the area of environmental NGOs and their impact on international governments and as well norm standards, the following researchers seems relevant here, to only mention a few: As early as in the late 1990s, Wapner published his study *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (Wapner, 1996). McCormick’s work *The Role of Environmental NGOs in International Regimes* published in 2011, compares well to the work of human rights NGOs. McCormick’s findings conclude that “environmental NGOs have contributed to the promotion of international regimes and a global civil society within which states and their citizens have redefined their relationships to one another and have helped us better understand the nature of global society” (McCormick, 2011, p. 109). He specifically looked at the development of an international environmental regime, in which NGOs, according to the author, have an undeniable role. Going a similar direction are Betsill and Corell, looking at *NGO Influence in International Environmental Negotiations* with a focus on desertification and climate change (Betsill & Corell, 2001). In 2008 the authors refreshed their analysis with a new edition of *The Influence of Nongovernmental Organizations in International Environmental Negotiations* (Betsill & Corell, 2008).

2.5.2. Norm emergence and the United Nations

Analyses of Amnesty International’s influence on human rights norms and their development are a recurring theme when looking at research about Amnesty International specifically. The development of human rights norms and how NGOs helped shaping those is overall a prominent topic. However, these works focus rather on Amnesty overall and do not look at one

single campaign's direct influence on site in the respective countries. The Campaign for the Abolition of Torture has been looked at by some others (e.g. Clark, 2001), regarding Amnesty's influence on shaping human rights norms against torture, at the United Nations level and the general international attention towards the topic torture.

In 2004 Martens studied Amnesty International's work at the United Nations. She looked at the activities in which Amnesty was involved at the United Nations and found that the NGO has expanded its portfolio from the 1990s to the early 2000s. She argues that in 2004, the organization "is basically involved in all stages of the political process; from agenda setting to policy formulation and project implementation" (Martens, 2004, p. 1050). Also, the author highlights the importance of Amnesty's work to open up the United Nations to NGOs in general, enabling them to participate beyond the function as agenda setters and actually become influential as policy formulators and advisers. Amnesty International became a member of working groups, through which it could give it advice to the United Nations openly. Also, the NGO was enabled to become in policy implementation, through working with the many UN agencies.

2.5.3. Global Governance

McCormick's study, which primarily looked at environmental NGOs, also shows an interest in international regimes. This area of research focuses in the direction of Global Governance, which is another topic often looked at in relation to Amnesty International. Weiss and Gordenker published research on NGOs, *The UN and Global Governance* (1996). The authors present five case studies of NGOs that are active in the areas of human rights, women, and humanitarian relief. Ultimately, the authors propose a new labor division between intergovernmental and nongovernmental actors, within the bigger picture of global governance.

2.5.4. Civil Societies

A significant amount of research is dedicated to examining Amnesty International's role as a civil society actor. Beginning with the most recent work, Savelsberg took a closer look at Amnesty as an actor at the conference of Darfur (Savelsberg, 2015). His interest focuses on how civil society actors contribute or support a criminal law response to mass violence, acknowledging the growing role of international NGOs in the prosecution and representation of mass atrocities. International NGOs can contribute to this process by for example drafting human rights documents, conducting research and then documenting human rights abuses, mobilizing the public, and lobbying with governments - to only name a few ways. Savelsberg concludes that Amnesty expanded its portfolio over the years, focusing more on the

“mobilization of public opinion and enactment of government policies when massive violations of human rights occurred anywhere around the globe” (Savelsberg, 2015, p. 64), moving away from the narrow focus on the individual.

Two studies that also focus on civil society are from the late 1990s. Clark looked at the *Sovereign Limits of Global Civil Society: A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women* (Clark et al., 1998). The author takes three United Nations world conferences “as examples of mutual encounters between state-dominated international politics and global civil politics” (Clark et al., 1998, p. 1). Criticizing previous research for being too narrow focused on certain NGOs and specific issue areas, the author aims at developing a concept of a global civil society. She targets the research on transnational relations concerning many topics such as the environment and human rights. The study concludes that NGOs are undeniably present on the world stage, meaning “their presence and issues form an integral part of UN thematic conferences” (Clark et al., 1998, p. 33). NGO-to-NGO networking has led to shared agendas at UN forums. In the end, the author argues that the global civil society is limited by state sovereignty, because states decide the level of engagement with the NGO.

In another study, Otto assessed *Nongovernmental Organizations in the United Nations System: The Emerging Role of International Civil Society* (1996). The author takes a look at the open-ended working group set up by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), that was established to “introduce coherent rules to regulate the participation of NGOs in international conferences organized by the United Nations” (Otto, 1996, p. 107). Otto emphasizes that the set-up of the UN Charter did not plan for such a strong NGO involvement and the many activities that NGOs carry out at the UN, and explains the ways in which NGOs were restricted or limited. For example, financial procedures had to be laid open. The restrictiveness becomes most visible when looking at the prerequisites for NGOs to obtain and maintain the observer status. The NGOs’ “aims and purposes must be consistent with the principles and spirit of the UN Charter” (Otto, 1996, p. 110) along with a variety of other factors such as having an established headquarter location. The way the strong focus on democracy and democratic values was formulated gave rise to concerns about a Western bias. Concluding, Otto underlines the power of citizens that is expressed through the persistent work of NGOs, opening up the order of state-centric views to more systems that also function outside of institutions or next to them. Finally, the author claims that the UN needs to change its “state-centric view [...] to be inclusive of peoples, as well as states” (Otto, 1996, p. 128).

2.5.5. Naming and Shaming campaigns

The research presented up until here has considerable overlaps with the interest of the thesis. Nevertheless, the most important work done so far is under the umbrella of so called naming and shaming campaigns. According to Spiller it is sometimes also referred to as Watchdog-Activism, reinforcing the image of NGOs watching government's behavior and in case of human rights violations raising awareness for it (Spiller, 2018, p. 104).

One of the most relevant works is Hafner-Burton's analysis of 145 countries, examining the relationship between naming and shaming campaigns and government's human rights practices from 1975 to 2000. She conducted the first global statistical analysis in the field with this research in 2008. According to the author "Naming and Shaming is a popular strategy to enforce human rights norms and laws" (Hafner-Burton, 2008, p. 689). The strategy is implemented when organizations call out governments for human rights abuses and publicly name the countries, in some cases also individuals, responsible for it. They then shame them by pointing out abuses carried out and the people responsible. They are publicly shamed for it which puts them under public pressure, and in many cases results in a public response. The outcome that is hoped for is an improvement of the human rights situation in the country and through the adequate reaction of its government.

However, Hafner-Burton's research shows a very paradoxical result that those campaigns can evoke. She provides statistic evidence that governments who are given that spotlight of being called out and shame publicly do continue, sometimes even increase some human rights violations, while others are reduced. According to the author there are two reasons for this development. On the one hand there are different capacities that governments have to implement improvements of different types of human rights. This refers to legal and political structures in the country. Some countries have less barriers and struggles to hold elections or pass new legislations that lead to a better protection of political rights than others, where terror groups or other nongovernmental agents dominate. This means even if governments want to respond to a shaming campaign, they might not have the means to do so independently, and might have to rely on international or cross border support.

On the other hand a government might strategically use human rights violations. "[W]hen faced with global pressures for reform, some despots use terror, such as killings or beatings, to counteract the effectiveness of political reforms they make in response to international pressure, such as holding elections" (Hafner-Burton, 2008, p. 691). On top of this worst case scenario, Hafner-Burton also argues that naming and shaming can be unproductive to some extent because NGOs and media do not have authority over states and governments. A

negative side effect might even be that political groups and other agents are attracted by the media attention and then carry out violence in order to be on the news media and NGOs agenda. When non-state actors engage in violent acts due to those campaigns, the government might respond with more violence towards the non-state actor, which then leads to a spiral of more violence and human rights abuses. Another aspect is the discrepancy between a promised or pretended improvement and reality. A head of state might seemingly respond to a naming and shaming campaign by holding elections, while actually manipulating those elections by terrorizing citizens and the opposition.

Despite these possible negative results, the author overall concludes that naming and shaming a government publicly can ideally result in better human rights practices. This “may be especially true when spotlights are shone on countries that have ratified global human rights treaties and when they are shone on countries, above all, on democracies that allow citizens to engage in domestic political protest and peaceful opposition” (Hafner-Burton, 2008, pp. 693-94). Governments do often respond in a positive manner, however this does not imply an overall stop to human rights abuses - it might refer to one specific subject only. The author suggests that the study does provide evidence for the success of naming and shaming campaigns, however governments in some parts of the world might respond more negatively - even detrimental for their citizens - than others.

Another work in the series of naming and shaming, and as of now the most recent one, is Meernik’s study from 2012, looking at *The Impact of Human Rights Organizations on Naming and Shaming Campaigns* (2012). The author takes a closer look at Urgent Actions, considering Amnesty’s quick response tool a naming and shaming campaign. A strong focus lies on how specific states become the targets of those campaigns and on Urgent Actions as campaigning tools. Similar to Hafner-Burton, the author declares naming and shaming campaigns “the principal weapon of choice among many international organizations and governments to improve states’ human rights” (Meernik et al., 2012, p. 233). According to the author, the agent using such campaigns hopes to evoke positive impacts on human rights execution, by applying pressure on governments through targeting them with public attention. Interestingly, Meernik puts a strong emphasis on the selective and intentional process preceding the choice of countries being target, which then leads to a disproportionate representation of countries. The factors they identify as influential towards the selection process when Amnesty International for example issues press releases and reports are: state power, media attention, and ultimately the level of human rights abuses.

2.5.6. Human Rights Organizations

Another area of research is the work of human rights NGOs in general, and Amnesty International within that field. A significant study from the late 1990s deals with *The work of Transnational Human Rights NGOs*, focusing on the 1990s. Smith reached out to 259 transnational human rights organizations, with a 55% response rate resulting in 159 countries as the sample, then looked at “the geographic distribution [...], their political activities, their work with international agencies, their organizational structures and resources, their links with NGOs, and their definition of human rights goals” (Smith et al., 1998, p. 380). Relying on previous research, the author points out results that show the crucial role of NGOs as agents of defining international human rights norms, ensuring the implementation, and observing human rights practices on both global and local level. Because previous research was narrow focused on single organizations or specific countries, the author aims to give a more general and wide-ranging view.

The results of the study show that the geographic distribution focused heavily on Western Europe and North America, to a significant amount on Asia, but with an obvious discrepancy far less on the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The author points out the paradox of this distribution, given that most human rights violations occur in the so called Global South, yet the least NGOs are from there, many times because of the repressive systems the countries are governed by. The study identifies the emergence of human rights NGOs as a phenomenon of the 1960s and ongoing. A difference of focuses of work is visible when comparing Northern and Southern NGOs, with the latter focusing on exerting influence on national institutions, while “Northern NGOs devote relatively little effort to reforming national institutions and practices” (Smith et al., 1998, p. 395). Despite these differences, the common denominator of most transnational NGOs is the priority of goals they have, focusing “around what are traditionally seen as civil and political rights (first generation), followed by social, economic, and cultural rights (second generation)” (Smith et al., 1998, p. 411).

In 2005, Ron looked at *Transnational Information Politics: NGO Human Rights Reporting* (Ron et al., 2005) with a strong focus on Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The author bases his results partially on interviews with staff from both NGOs, looking specifically for types and styles of information politics. Before going into detail about the results he defines and illustrates Amnesty as an international nongovernmental actor. He breaks down Amnesty’s tools and methods as influential for other NGOs, underlining the organization’s pioneer character in regards to international advocacy on an NGO level. Among the methods he lists are naming and shaming, elite advocacy, and grass root mobilization (Ron et al., 2005, p. 559).

Next to the interviews, Ron also looked at the amounts of country reports Amnesty International has produced for different countries, in order to see patterns of focus here. Using Amnesty as “an exemplary transnational actor” (Ron et al., 2005, p. 558), the study shows that the organization does have different amounts of output for different countries and regions. “The group produces more written work on some countries than others to maximize advocacy opportunities, shape international standards, promote greater awareness, and raise its profile” (Ron et al., 2005, p. 557). Ron considers country reports an important measure to assess information politics.

A sample population of 148 countries, in the timeframe of 1986 to 2000 was the foundation for the study. The documents chosen were background reports and press releases published by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The countries that Amnesty reported on the most, or with which most press releases dealt with, were similar or equal to the countries Human Rights Watch reported on the most. A prioritization of the agenda of output produced is based on the human rights conditions in the countries. In conclusion the author argues that “while Amnesty’s universe of obligation includes all of humanity, our analysis of Amnesty’s written work suggests that considerations of efficacy and visibility force the group, like other transnational NGOs, to devote more attention to some areas than others” (Ron et al., 2005, pp. 575- 76). The author finds such a selective and controlled way of producing output effective. He argues that NGOs can make a bigger impact when focusing on “powerful or high-visibility countries, and they can later use the momentum to protect violations elsewhere” (Ron et al., 2005, p. 576). Ultimately, the study gives a strong argument for NGOs as legitimate and important global actors, who do cause change.

2.5.7. Cooperation with other actors

Meernik argues that Amnesty chooses targeted countries for their Urgent Actions based on strategically thinking about their own budget, which does also direct the agenda. Choosing countries that are highly visible will in turn help them “gain momentum to protest violations everywhere” (Meernik et al., 2012, p. 237) which then also helps the organization to be more successful. “Scholars imply that recently the human rights agenda has been dictated by the necessity of organizations to maintain their ‘market share’ “. (Meernik et al., 2012, p. 237). Meernik also expects Amnesty to choose countries where information is easily accessible and where the distribution of information within the target country is working well. The author argues that International NGOs work with reliable information from onsite domestic organizations when documenting human rights abuses. Another factor, that dictates the agenda, is the presence of local human rights organizations, which helps a state elevate on the agenda of international human rights, and more likely turns it into a target state.

The conclusion drawn from looking at this selection process outlined is that Amnesty International issues Urgent Actions “with greatest frequency to target states in which there are active human rights groups that can begin the boomerang process and engage in increased communication with international organizations” (Meernik et al., 2012, p. 241). Resulting from that will be an increase in Urgent Actions campaigns in those places. To conclude, the author shows that a crucial determinant for a country’s likelihood to become a target is the number of human rights organizations present in this country.

2.5.8. Negative impacts of Amnesty International’s work

Interestingly, different other authors reference Hafner-Burton very differently. While most of them pick and choose her positive results, Davis stresses the negative outcome of Amnesty International’s attention towards a country, which resulted in more widespread torture the following year (Davis et al., 2012, p. 208).

Davis examined whether international human rights NGOs impact public opinion through their work. The study from 2012 argues that shaming governments publicly is a tool to provide information to citizens in repressive regimes. Also, it argues that naming and shaming is one of the most powerful tools NGOs can use. The author looked at public perception of the repression of governments. An underlying hypothesis is, that the information given to the public, namely to citizens of those countries, provided by international human rights NGOs is key to the human rights awareness within the country. Preceding research, that the author references, looks at human rights NGOs improving the human rights implementation in countries. Various results show “a correlation between the overall number of all types of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) with in-state membership, as a proxy for overall civil society, and better human rights practices. [...] greater numbers of human rights INGOs, as opposed to all INGOs, within a state significantly impacts human rights performance” (Davis et al., 2012, p. 207). One of the results from previous research that the author heavily focuses on is that studies fail to take into consideration the pressure from above and below that states need to be exposed to in order for NGOs work to bear fruit. Murdie and Davis (Murdie & Davis, 2012) find that only a combined effort of the initial international human rights NGO and either third parties joining the shaming process or domestic human rights NGOs taking action leads to an improved practice of human rights in a country. This then relates to the importance of informing the public about human rights abuses, because only when the citizens are aware the state also experiences pressure from below.

Davis’ research concludes with an overall result that international NGOs with a human rights focus are “powerful conduits through which a population becomes informed of domestic human

rights issues” (Davis et al., 2012, p. 200). The author underlines the importance of this by stating that a worsening human rights situation does not lead to more knowledge about it automatically - many people might continue thinking their government is protecting human rights despite a poor human rights practice in the country. They simply lack the proper information. Using this mechanism of informing the public and being “makers and shapers of public opinion” (Davis et al., 2012, p. 201), the work of international human rights NGOs goes beyond mobilizing supporters and members and overlaps with human rights education. Influencing the domestic public opinion ideally increases pressure within the country, which then ties together with international pressure, ultimately seeking to improve the human rights practice in the respective country. Davis’ results support both, the boomerang and the spiral model, which are introduced later in this chapter.

2.5.9. Advocacy networks and Human Rights Norms Implementation

Looking at advocacy networks and human rights norms implementation there are two foundational concepts that many authors refer to: the *boomerang model* and the *spiral model*. The boomerang model was introduced in 1998 by Keck and Sikkink. The two researchers published their book *Activists beyond borders. Advocacy Networks in International Politics* in which they looked at transnational advocacy networks. According to the authors these networks helped instigating a change - from a mere existence of a non-binding Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to an actual human rights consciousness - between 1968 and 1993. In their introductory chapter they argue that “advocacy networks often reach beyond policy change to advocate and instigate changes in the institutional and principled basis of international interactions. When they succeed, they are an important part of an explanation for changes in world politics” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 2). The networks aim at evoking changes of behavior of states and try to foster the implementation of existing human rights norms.

The theory that Keck and Sikkink introduce is the *boomerang model* or *pattern*. The underlying logic of the model implies “that a domestic group should reach out to international allies to bring pressure on its government to change its domestic practices” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 36). The boomerang pattern is used most when campaigns try to impact a government’s behavior or its policies. According to the authors “[g]overnments are the primary ‘guarantors’ of rights, but also their primary violators” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 12), meaning this is the agent that is to be addressed by NGOs. Especially when domestic NGOs have no channels to communicate with the state, the boomerang model comes into effect, with NGOs seeking international allies to increase outside pressure. Nevertheless, the domestic NGOs are important in terms of gathering information which creates pressure against the regime either locally or globally. The international pressure created through either first successful local

pressure, or the lack thereof, increases the international scrutiny. Countries become inclined to respond because international pressure and media attention might lead to more attention, or concessions such as a loss of foreign aid (Davis et al., 2012, p. 205).

Concluding, Keck and Sikkink outline the combination necessary for activating the boomerang model: “closed domestic structure in one country with open structures in other countries and with international organizations” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 202). Ultimately, human rights NGOs are central in the boomerang model, as they increase the pressure from below and above.

Next to the boomerang pattern of advocacy, Risse developed the spiral model. Reflecting on 50 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Independence, the author considers it appropriate to put the non-binding treaty to a test. At its core, the study tries to evaluate the impact of the human rights norms established in the Universal Declaration, and according to the author now “embodied in diverse international agreements and treaties” (Risse et al., 1999, p. 1). He wants to assess whether the human rights principles actually impacts state behavior towards citizens and whether human rights norms are part of domestic practices. Conducting the research in 1999, the study considers itself pioneering in approaching a wide-ranging view on “the actual impact that international norms can have on domestic politics” (Risse et al., 1999, p. 2). Ultimately, the study focuses on the general impact that norms have on country behavior. This means, the focus does not lie on non-governmental agents solely. The author focuses on certain rights, he considers to be crucial, however he underlines that others are equally important. The core achievement of the study is the five-phase *spiral model* it proposes. It seeks to explain why different states internalized human rights norms differently. The underlying assumption for this concept is that “enduring human rights changes [...] go hand in hand with domestic structural changes” (Risse et al., 1999, p. 4).

The spiral model, also labelled “socialization process” essentially has five phases that attempt to describe the “causal mechanisms that facilitate the internalization of norms and practices into domestic political arenas” (Pace, 2001, p. 9). It is important to note that the concept is not universally applicable to all countries - most of the critique the authors had to face was voiced in that direction - and that countries do go through the five phases differently, or only to some extent, depending on their size, strength of opposition, and generally the state with its political structures and institutions itself.

The first phase is an initial state of repression that a state exercises. Human rights abuses are happening, often times even through oppressive policies, while local NGOs are on the other end trying to document the abuses. If the advocacy networks are successful in creating international attention for the violations, phase two follows. In the second phase, the repressive countries are most often in denial, when being forced to respond to the public attention and accusations. If the external pressure and a strong advocacy network remain consistent, phase three begins, as the state becomes more vulnerable to the attention and pressure.

In the third phase, tactical concessions, according to Pace is the most crucial for a sustainable outcome, which is ideally an improvement of the human rights practices in the country. If the spiral leads up to phase three, the government begins to issue policies that lessen abuses, or simply stops some very visible cases of abuse, in order to avoid further attention. If, despite tactical concessions, the criticism from within the country continues, the fourth phase, introduces a prescriptive phase, where the internalization and institutionalization of the human rights norms ideally becomes part of an overall regime change, or in general a process of liberalization is introduced. A regime change is the most successful and sustainable result the spiral can achieve. The state finds itself in a position where it is forced to liberalize its policies. In a final phase, the change of behavior to a better human rights practice remains as a rule-consistent behavior, implying the state institutionalized and internalized international human rights standards.

As a review of the spiral by Pace shows, seven out of ten countries in Risse's study successfully reached the last phase. However, Pace criticizes that the concept rather applies to smaller states. Also, he introduces cases the spiral models fails to explain at all, such as when a country simply completely ignores the international pressure. What unites both, the spiral and the boomerang model, is the essential work that human rights NGOs put in to set the effects in motion. In order to obtain and sustain international pressure, in support of domestic pressure, international NGOs play a huge part in assisting local networks. Also, both models are multi-layered and require several steps.

2.6. Gaps in Literature

It is undeniable that human rights NGOs "perform a key role in achieving human rights improvements" (Davis et al., 2012, p. 206). Many of the above studies and authors demonstrate gaps in research. The use of campaigns as a tool has been discussed extensively. However, there is a need to look at the practice itself. The review reveals that human rights violations in a country alone do not cause awareness of citizens for those abuses.

International and domestic human rights NGOs remain as crucial agents that can step in and raise awareness through consistent observation and documentation of human rights practices.

Meernik suggests to look at a macro-level, the overall improvement of human rights implementation in countries, while also looking at specific examples such as Urgent Actions and their direct impact on individuals addressed in them. He emphasizes the need for investigation of spillover effects, asking whether a country which is targeted by a naming and shaming campaigns, sees the effects result in further action by more international organizations or other governments (Meernik et al., 2012, p. 253).

Thus the review also points to a need for further analysis of the impact of naming and shaming campaigns. There is a gap in understanding the effectiveness of these campaigns.

Davis also points out the need for quantitative studies of public opinion about human rights in repressive regimes specifically the effects of international human rights NGOs have on the public opinion (Davis et al., 2012, pp. 201-202). While there is a lot of research going into naming and shaming campaigns, Write for Rights has yet to be looked at in detail. Also, Write for Rights is particularly interesting, as it combines the mechanism of letter protest, with the model of naming and shaming. Urgent Actions have been targeted by Meernik (2012), however mostly in regards to the selection process of choosing the cases. It also important to address the impact of the campaigns through the lens of theory of change. The gaps in the literature paves way for this study and it attempts to understand the impact of the Write for Rights campaign.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology in detail. It elaborates the research design, theoretical framework, sampling, data collection processes, instruments used in the study, and the data analysis method. Lastly it also briefly spells out the ethical aspects concerning the study.

Table 1: Overview of Research Methodology

Methodology	Research Design	Sample(s)	Instruments	Data Collection	Data Analysis
Present study	Qualitative	1. Human Rights Documents 2. Amnesty International and other organizations, institutions	1. Documents on Write for Rights Campaign 2. Semi-Structured Interview-Guide	1. Documentary review and data search for available documents 2. Expert Interview	1. Interpretation of documentary review 2. Tesch's method for interpreting expert interviews

3.1. Research Setting

The research is based in Vienna. The experts for interviews are based in the United Kingdom, in Germany, and in Hong Kong. Since there were no travel funds available the interviews were conducted via e-mail, which was easily possible as none of the experts selected is part of a captive population. The expert interviews were collected over a period of three weeks, in July 2019. The contact with the experts was established through e-mail. The addresses were found through an online research of Amnesty International staff.

3.2. Research Design

The research design is underpinned with the theory of change and it aims at measuring the impact of Amnesty International's campaign Write for Rights. This study focuses on a qualitative research paradigm. Flick explains that "[q]ualitative research is oriented towards analyzing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity" (Flick, 2009, p. 21) which enables qualitative research designs to remain flexible towards their objectives, giving me as the researcher an opportunity to adapt within the process if necessary (Flick, 2009, p. 21).

According to Flick, choosing a case study design entails pointing out the importance of the chosen case and its meaning. Further, he argues that it describes a process and reconstructs a case in detail. Edmonds and Kennedy describe a case study as a process of "developing a

narrative or revealing a phenomenon based on an in-depth, real-time, or retrospective analysis of a case” (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017, p. 143). The literature on expert interviews within the variety of qualitative interviews in social science often argues that the expert interview is used in addition to another method, with the two methods applied complementing each other (for example Flick, 2009, p. 169; cf. Bogner et al., 2014, p. 13 ff.; Pickel et al., 2009, p. 466).

3.3. Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the theory of change to assess the impact of human rights implementation. This theory is used to understand processes, improve them, and understand interrelations. As theory of change looks at different parts of work and processes within (NGO) organizations, it can easily be applied to different types of analysis. It is the ideal theoretical framework for looking at impact. It holds the research together as it inspires the interview guide by large, but also guides the data analysis for the document reviews and the expert interviews.

3.4. Sampling

Sampling for the first phase of data collection included specific information on Write for Right campaigns on Amnesty International's website. These specificities are defined in the data collection and data analysis sections.

In the second phase of sampling, the sample size was narrowed to interviewing 75 experts selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience on human rights issues. However, ultimately only three experts were interviewed for this study. Flick argues that most commonly “staff members of an organization with a specific function and a specific (professional) experience and knowledge are the target groups” (Flick, 2009, p. 166). Flick further says that experts are defined by what they know and what they can add to the research rather than what position they have in a hierarchy: “Experts have technical process oriented and interpretive knowledge referring to their specific professional sphere of activity. Thus, expert knowledge does not only consist of systematized and reflexively accessible specialist knowledge, but it has the character of practical knowledge in big parts” (Flick, 2009, p. 166, quoting Bogner & Menz, 2002, p. 46).

3.5. Data collection

The data was gathered in two phases.

3.5.1. Phase one: Documentary review and data searches

The first phase of the study was substantive research which involved building a comprehensive and detailed picture of the Write for Rights campaign from its documented period. This was

achieved through an intensive and extensive analysis of the relevant documentation including Amnesty International Websites, White Papers, and Reports from Amnesty International and Newspaper articles.

3.5.2. Phase two: Expert interviews

In phase two, data was collected through expert interviews. In order to add further qualitative background to the issues that emerge from analyzing documents, interviews of a cross-section was conducted. A list of experts was created by doing an online search of staff members of Amnesty International. They were contacted via email and a semi-structured interview guide was sent to them. This strategy was used as there is no additional funding available for travel, ideally it would have been best to do a face-to-face interview. The selection of the experts was also be based on availability and accessibility, since the limited time scope of the thesis does not allow for an extensive expert research. Still, this method allows to cover a variety of backgrounds and should allow for diverse answers and inputs that add to a profound analysis of the situation.

3.6. Instruments for Data Gathering

In the phase one, data was gathered through a search engine. All reports are available online and information related to Write for Rights campaign is available on the various field offices websites of Amnesty International. In phase two, a semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data for expert interviews. An expert interview is a common tool in qualitative interviews and social science, “a specific form of applying semi-structured interviews” (Flick, 2009, p. 165) and draws on the expert knowledge of the topic.

The National Contact Point’s (NPC) four pillar approach argues that “qualitative interviews are more appropriate to understand how and why change might have happened and are generally not easy to use as measures of impact” (Kazimirski & Pritchard, 2014 p. 46). Bogner also underlines how expert interviews are particularly useful when assessing processes. He further elaborates that there are three types of knowledge an expert has to offer: procedural/process knowledge, interpretive knowledge, and technical knowledge, by which they refer to mere facts and numbers (Bogner et al., 2014, p. 17 - 19).

3.7. Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two phases.

3.7.1. Phase one: A comprehensive analysis of the ‘Write for Rights’ campaign

The data was analysed “for exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive purposes” (Radey, 2010; p. 165). This was re-analysis of data (campaign materials, success stories) with another purpose than what was originally intended. Secondary analysis is worthy of attention, because it provides easily assessable data and has a potential for resource and time savings (Kiecolt & Nathan, 1985, p. 11).

This process involved collating and analyzing four key elements:

- Issues raised in the campaigns
- Right(s) violated
- The people/Groups for whom the Write for Rights campaign was conducted
- Countries these campaigns were conducted

Also, the year of the campaign from which the data came was included.

3.7.2. Phase two: Understanding the factors leading to impact

The second phase of data analysis was to analyze the data received from expert interviews. It was a text-based analysis following Tesch’s criteria.

The following was the method to analyze the text from the expert interviews

- After receiving data (response to the interview guide), it was grouped under one document.
- Defining the unit or theme of analysis: The data was classified into units which were words, phrases or sentences. Upon further investigation, themes falling under this unit were put together. Unit and themes were based on the objectives of the study.
- Developing categories and coding scheme: Next sub-categories and coding scheme for the analysis were developed. This was derived from the phase one analysis of data collection - documentary review and from the expert interviews. The categories were developed and were adjusted all along while conducting the analysis. This procedure was deductive (Bogner et al., 2014, p. 72-75).
- Drawing inferences on the basis of coding or themes: Since this was a deductive procedure, inferences were drawn on the basis of codes and categories generated. It was important to explore the properties, dimensions and identify the relationship and uncover patterns in order to present the analysis. As these were not large quantities of data, this part of data analysis was carried out manually and no software was used for the same.
- Presentation of results: The results from each theme are supported by secondary data and quotes from the developed code. Depending on the data gathered, results are

presented in the form of graphs, matrices, or conceptual frameworks. In an ideal case the result would have allowed the researcher to create or a model or a theory based on the results: “the reconstruction of the meaning of expert statements in terms of their underlying structures” (Bogner et al., 2014, p. 75).

3.8. Ethical aspect

There was no direct risk to the participants, in this case employees of Amnesty International. However, it is imperative to foresee any possible risks for the participants. This could entail ‘retaliation’ from the organization itself in case there are negative outcomes. Hence, for this reason, the principle of ‘informed consent’ was most important. Further, the principle of anonymization with reference to the names of the interviewees is applied. Bogner argues that the more in detail the position of the interviewee within the organization is described, the easier it might be for coworkers to figure out the person, despite anonymizing the name. The interview data was and is treated with confidentiality, and the personal data of the participants is protected and anonymized to prevent the possibility of re-identification. Also, the participants were informed about the process and the documentation and storing of the data at the start of the interview (cf. Bogner et. al., 2014, pp. 88 – 90; and Iphofen, n.d., p. 2 ff.). As a matter of upholding ethical integrity of the study, the raw data (which includes names) were only shared with the thesis supervisor and no one else under any circumstances.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter is mainly divided in two sections. It aims to answer the sub-objectives of this study. The first section presents the collated information on Write for Rights campaigns from 2015 to 2018. The table of analysis can be found in the appendix (Appendix III). The second section of this chapter reveals the factors leading to an (un)successful Write for Rights campaign, by analyzing the data from the expert interviews. Both parts of analysis are presented according to themes that relate to the objectives of the study and the campaign objectives that Amnesty International sets out.

4.1. Collation of Write for Rights campaigns

The collation of Write for Rights target cases adds up to a list of 44 cases that were part of the campaigns from 2015 to 2018. The cases are collated on the basis of the characteristics or categories of the cases, the issues raised in the campaign, the rights that were violated, and the countries where these violations took place. In the presentation of this analysis, special features that stand out are added. Based on these variables, the following analysis was prepared.

4.2. Case Categories and Characteristics

There are 44 cases in all that were selected from the campaigns from 2015 to 2018. The striking highlight of all these cases, in terms of characteristics, is that the vast majority of them are people who themselves are active in the area of human rights, some more actively than others. There are only slightly more than ten per cent of the cases in total where the person (or group) of focus is not related to human rights work, but simply a victim of human rights violations. One example from the 2016 campaign is a girl with Albinism, whose life is threatened in her home country Malawi, because people want to use parts of her body as they believe it has magic powers (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 10). The girl herself is not an active human rights defender (yet), but she is picked as a case and represents a minority of people in especially African countries whose life is in danger because of their condition, namely Albinism. Another example of a case where the person herself is not related to human rights work is a 2015 case of a Mexican woman who “confessed to murder after 15 hours of torture” (Amnesty International, 2015b, p. 14). Yecenia Armenta was arrested because the police accused her of ordering her husband’s murder. The woman signed a confession only after she had been tortured for hours. Besides the big majority of human rights defenders picked as cases, there are more characteristics that seem to be reoccurring patterns. In the following, they are looked at in detail.

4.2.1. Human Rights Defenders

As explained, the big majority of cases represents people or groups of people that are themselves active in human rights work. In 2018, the campaign focused on so called “women human rights defenders” solely. The cases chosen were all concerned with females across the globe, who devoted their life to the fight for human rights, or who have suffered in the battle thereof. The other three years also show high numbers of human rights defenders picked as cases. Some cases are people in positions that related to human rights work and standing up for them, but not necessarily classify as traditional human rights defenders. However, the term itself could also be a question of debate. Therefore, I consider people as human rights defenders whose work is actively related to promoting human rights, working for their enforcement and implementation, and fighting against rights abuses. Counting the 2018 campaign focusing on women human rights defenders and adding the other human rights defender cases on top, the amount of cases that address people in that position in the campaign from 2015 to 2018 is at around 75% of the whole sample. Some positions that people are in are: lawyers, journalists (especially in strict regimes and country where the freedom of the press is at risk), bloggers, and other types of online activists.

Among the cases there is a variety of ways these people stand up for human rights. Some of them support a minority they are part of, whether that be an ethnic minority (for example a 2016 case, the political activist Zeynab Jalalian, who supports (female) Kurds in Iran (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 20) or a minority based on sexual orientation (for example a 2017 case, the Finnish activist Sakir Kupila, who is transgender himself and fights for the rights of LGBTI people in Finland (Amnesty International, 2018b, p. 16). As the 2018 campaign focused on women one could expect those women to work mostly on female related topics, however their activism covers just as diverse topics as the other campaign years do.

4.2.2. Environmental and Indigenous Land Rights Defenders

Within the group of human rights defenders there is a sub-group of people focusing on environmental related rights, mostly focused on land rights which refers to indigenous land that is taken away from indigenous communities because of corporations and governments.

Seven out of the 44 cases are clearly related to indigenous rights and the protection of land. In most cases corporations are taking over the land in order to start for example copper or silver mining. In some cases the communities are already victims to forced evictions, harassment, and intimidation enforced by the government, such as the Sengwer people in Kenya (Case in the Campaign of 2018). In other cases, like the 2016 case in Canada, the campaign first and foremost supports an activist who is fighting against the government allowing companies to build on indigenous land.

4.3. Rights violated

Since the documents for the campaign differ each year, there is no standardized output or overview of cases which lists the rights violated. Some years the campaign material specifically talks about the right (or several if applicable) and mentions it. In other years, the cases are only presented within their context and mention the issues raised, but it is not explicitly said which right is violated. For those, I had to list the rights myself, which might result in a different classification than Amnesty International would have come up with. Often, I felt as though most cases cannot be pinned down to one violation, but rather relate to several human rights that were violated. Most of the time, when the person was already in prison and the inhuman conditions there are focus of the campaign, then naturally prior to that a violation of the freedom of expression or of peaceful assembly had already happened, leading to the imprisonment in the first place.

4.3.1. Common Topics

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify common topics and recurring themes among the cases from the last four years. One topic clearly is supporting human rights defenders, however they fight for a variety of rights. In relation to people fighting for human rights there is a variety of issues raised in regards to what the people have to face: harassment and intimidation of authorities such as the police, arrest without evidence, enforced disappearances of either the activists or their family members, and then often inhuman conditions in prison, some even as far as torture. Related to the previous discussed area of indigenous rights, a recurring topic is forced evictions of communities whose indigenous land is of value and interest to companies. In general, indigenous rights and the violation thereof is targeted in around 15% of the cases, in every case in regards to indigenous land.

4.3.2. LGBTI Rights

One of the rights the campaigns also focus on, and which appears with frequency, is related to sexual orientation and being discriminated against because of it. It is the topic of LGBTI rights and activists that support those. Next to the Finnish case of 2017, a very prominent LGBTI case was Vitalina Koval from 2018 (Amnesty International, 2019a). The Ukrainian activist joined forces with Amnesty and I was able to witness her at a speaker's tour event in Austria, where she also expressed her gratitude for the support through the campaign. Overall, five of the 44 cases related to LGBTI activism or discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation. A case from Greece from 2015 demonstrates that Amnesty International supports this topic for some time now and with that seems to meet contemporary areas of interest. This trend also relates to other work Amnesty International does in the area of LGBT rights, such as hosting Queer Amnesty groups in national sections.

4.3.3. Political Rights: Freedom of Expression

Many of the cases that circle around human rights defenders are looking at similar rights that were violated, which is due to similar situations these people were in. A very common case is the arrest during a demonstration or peaceful protest, which violates the right to Peaceful Assembly. Also very often is the violation of the right to Freedom of Expression. In some cases the two overlap, but the freedom of expression is also connected to activists being harassed for their work more generally. When activists speak about poor human rights practices and raise awareness for violations in their countries they also often face the consequences of being imprisoned or harassed by officials for executing their right to freedom of expression. Outside of physical protest human rights defenders use blogs, newspaper articles, social media, and other platforms to express their opinion. The protest against and critique of a regime has many faces and channels whether that be classical newspapers and explicitly mentioning rights violations or publishing political satire in form of cartoons that are distributed on Twitter (Amnesty International, 2015b, p. 13).

4.3.4. Freedom from Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, Torture, No Fair Trial

A common topic next to freedom of expression, is the conditions of people in prison or detention, often related to torture. Arrest without evidence was an issue in more than one case, violating the right of being innocent until proven guilty. In plenty of cases the trials are not fair and people have no access to lawyers or legal assistance. Also, they are often denied contact with their families or are even kept in secret places that the family receives no information about. While being in prison, there is a long list of cases where the conditions are inhuman and the prisoner is treated in a degrading manner. The worst cases show incidents of torture and denial of medical assistance and supply, resulting in poor and dramatically worsening health conditions of the prisoners. Some examples of those severe cases are the denial of medication for Shawkan, an Egyptian photo journalist who suffers from Hepatitis C (2016 Campaign), no medical assistance for political activist Zeynab Jalalian who suffers from an eye problem (2016 Campaign), and Egyptian student Israa Al-Taweel, who was denied medical assistance despite her disability (2015 Campaign).

4.4. Countries

When looking at the distribution of cases across countries and continents there is nothing that seems to be standing out as a pattern. No country was part of the campaign in all four years, but three countries were represented with cases in three out of the four years: Egypt, Iran, and The United States of America. To pick just one example: Iran, the selection of the cases related to the country demonstrate the variety of violation of rights that occur in the country. In 2015 a case was picked that supported “juvenile detention and execution of minors” (Amnesty

International, 2015b, p. 12). The 2016 case supported political activist Zeynab Jalalian whose work focuses on the Kurdish minority in the country (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 20), and the most recent campaign of 2018 included the case of Atena Damei, a woman human rights defender who stands up against the death penalty and is an advocate of women rights (Amnesty International – Int. Secretariat, 2018, p. 85).

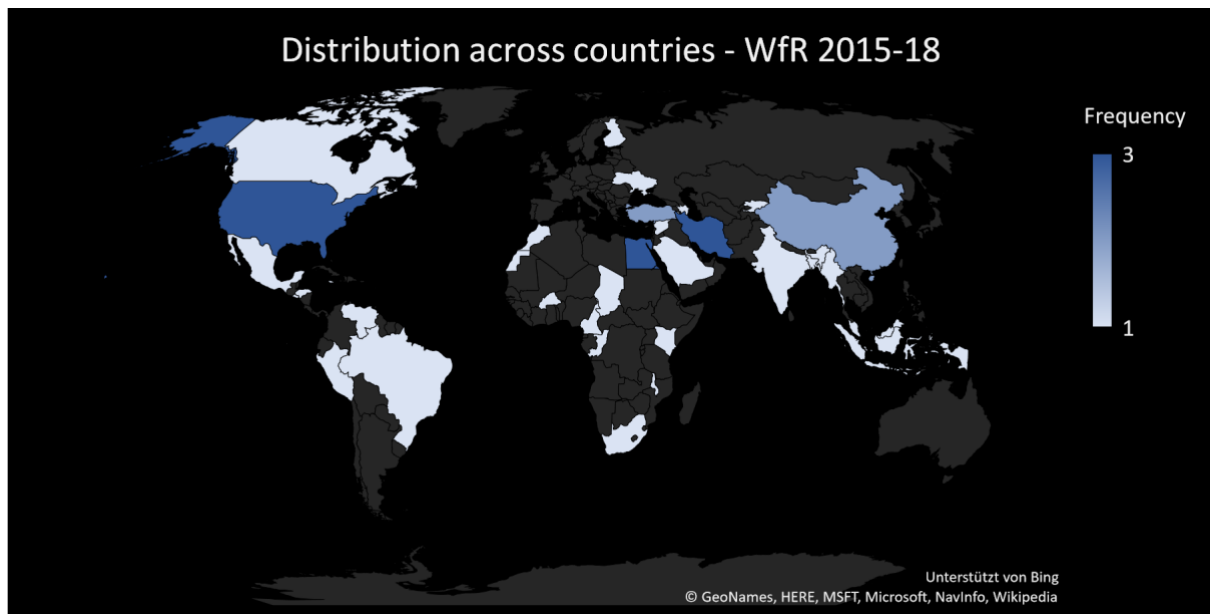


Figure 5: Distribution of cases across countries, colored according to frequency that they appear in the campaign (Based on analysis data)

Taking a look at the different continents it becomes clear that Asia and Africa make up the most of the cases, both close to one third of the total each. It was a surprise to me that only five out of 44 cases came from South America, while six cases each came from Europe and North America. Without further input from the expert interviews the country data did not yet offer obvious information that could add to the understanding of the impact of the campaigns or reveal a pattern that could be related back to criteria of picking cases. However, at this point already it became evident that certain assumptions the researcher took had been fulfilled.

4.5. Special features and emerging concerns

There were some special features of the campaign that stood out during the analysis. One of them was the fact that only one of the campaign cases explicitly offered information about the cooperation with local partners. Another special feature was the fact that the regional distribution of cases was not proportional. As discussed under 4.4, it was rather a focus on African and Asian countries, leaving Europe, North America, and South America with only a third of the cases collectively. Regarding the source of the data, it became clear that the information about the Write for Rights campaigns is not collectively gathered in one place but rather spread out across the website of Amnesty International UK as a data base. In terms of

documentation of the campaigns, it was interesting to see that all four years the campaign material differs.

4.5.1. Cooperation with local organizations

Cooperation with other organizations was explicitly mentioned and heavily underlined in one case. In 2017, an online activist and blogger - Mahadine from Chad was part of the campaign. In his case Amnesty relied heavily on the work with a local organization called CAMOJET in order to deliver the solidarity letters that thousands of people had written for Mahadine. Amnesty International had tried to visit Mahadine in prison but was denied access from the Chadian authorities. In the 2017 campaign report Amnesty International underlined this as a prime example for “collaboration with local organizations especially in a difficult case as this one where even Mahadine’s family and friends are afraid to publicly show their support for fear of reprisals from the government” (Amnesty International, 2018b, pp. 8 – 9). It underlines how sensitive some cases are and how careful Amnesty International has to plan their actions, taking into account the prisoner’s condition, his families’ safety and the government’s possible reaction to the campaign.

4.5.2. Presentation of case material

The campaigning strategies and new channels of communication evolved each year and therefore was different from the previous years. In these materials some mention the type of right that is violated, with a sentence or a bullet point, while other booklets and pamphlets describe the situation at hand. Also, each year there seems to be a different amount of documents and material created around the campaign and the type of content differs.

4.6. Conclusion to collation of Write for Rights

The collation of 44 cases from the Write for Rights Campaigns of the last four years has highlighted the human rights issues that were dealt with. Further it has revealed some key features of the campaign. One key take away is the focus on human rights defenders and activists as target cases. The country distribution is not proportional but rather shows an imbalance of continents. Also, some of the special features such as cooperation with local partners and presentation of campaign material that stood out leave room for interpretation.

4.7. Expert interviews – Amnesty International Staff

The data for part two of the analysis were collected by carrying out expert interviews with Amnesty International staff. The interview guide that I put together was based on the first part of the analysis and its outcomes, as well as generally connected to the study's objectives. The guide consists of 43 questions. Some of the questions are open-ended, others are close-ended. One question includes a table that asks for a confirmation or a rejection of a statement. After sending out the interview guide to a total of 75 people, three of the staff of Amnesty International answered the guide. The three experts occupy different positions within the organization, one of them being part of Amnesty International in the United Kingdom, one in the German national section, and one located in Hong Kong. As indicated under ethical aspects (Chapter 3.8), in order to protect the identities of the interviewees, no names are mentioned. The three experts were located in London, Hong Kong and Berlin. They work in the area of research, media management and campaigning

All three experts have between 12 to 15 years of experience with the organization. This allows the assumption that their responses are based on knowledge of the organization, their experience with the campaign, and many years of work as staff of Amnesty International. So despite a disappointingly low turnout of participants it provides for substantial responses from three experienced, senior level staff members. One concern however was that perhaps the long involvement of the staff could be routine-blinded, losing the ability to look at the organization with an outsider's perspective. However, since I am looking for answers from within the organization this concern should not influence the results in any negative way.

This section of the analysis classifies the data into units that are based on the study's objectives. The units are made up of either words, phrases, or sentences and aim at grouping themes together that all fall under the same unit. The overall objective of the study is to understand and explore the impact of the campaign. Together with the sub-objective: looking at factors for success or no success, this leads to units and themes that all more or less circle around the topics of campaign impact and success or no success.

4.8. Strategic Planning and Campaign Objectives

The set up and the logistics of the campaign aid in understanding the context that the impact and the (un)success factors are embedded into. Even though some information on the creation and monitoring of the campaign are available online, the input provided by the experts gave a detailed understanding of the process. The experts responded that the International Secretariat is ultimately responsible for the Write for Rights campaigns. There are two groups at Amnesty International UK that work together: The Project Group (Operational Work) and

the Steering Group (Strategic Work). Nevertheless, the input from the various national sections remains important. The national sections send in proposals, cases for consideration that are then selected and chosen by the team based in London. When a case from a certain country is chosen, the London Office continues working closely with the National Section on site in order to follow up on more specific information and for incoming updates.

4.8.1. Human and Financial Resources

Looking at human resources it becomes evident that the campaign is an annual project and has been going on for some years now. The people working on the campaign are picked by the Campaign Manager. The Individuals at Risk team coordinates the campaign, hence also hosts the most staff concerned with it. They rely on their internal Write for Rights team and the respective country experts that are needed depending on what cases are picked that year. Then, national sections pick staff that is involved when helping the London team with specific cases from the respective country. Also, the national sections have their respective staff, mostly campaigners, who helps with carrying out the campaign domestically. Those campaigners are in constant communication with the core team in London. The involvement of workforce is diverse and one of the experts says that, *“In order to achieve the success of the campaign, both offline and online, paid staff and volunteers, work for the campaign in various areas such as online editorial office, campaigns, marketing, design, social media, press, topic experts”*. Regarding budget allocation, one of the experts stated that *“a small central budget is held by the project manager”* while more specific budgets are handled by the respective teams.

4.8.2. Motivation of the staff and Leadership

The motivation factor for the staff is a crucial element that leads to a successful or unsuccessful campaign. In any work, unless an individual is motivated, there is hardly a feeling of achievement when the task is completed. One of the responses regarding the motivation of Amnesty International staff was that, *“Since the campaign is based on the origins of Amnesty (letter writing), the campaign has a special ‘charm’”*. The expert referred to the routine that the campaign has developed over the years, but also the immediate reward the staff gets when managing to gather many participants, thus making it a quantitatively successful campaign. Further, the experts argue that project groups are key to motivating staff. An internal communications program helps in the process. Also, the expert considers that the skills of leadership are highly relevant for a staff member that works in this campaign. Skills such as strategic direction, internal advocacy, ambition, and expertise about the relevant countries of the selected cases are considered extremely beneficial. Further, implementing the campaign

strategies that are designed and agreed by the relevant teams involved in planning is also one of the skills required for good leadership.

4.9. Campaign objectives

The Write for Rights campaign pursues several objectives: to create awareness, to make the voices known in case of human rights violations, to address governments and authorities, and to express support for human rights defenders. This can be found online in one of the resource materials for the campaign. Nevertheless, it seemed relevant to understand how the objectives of each campaigns are set. The objectives seem to be something that is communicated consistently within the organization. “*The Write for Rights team, the Individuals at Risk team, and the relevant country teams*” work on it together, while the steering group of the campaign gives the incentive. The goals are focused on “human rights impact for the individuals featured”, which relates to the indicators of success as can be seen later. This demonstrates that the campaign objectives are actually followed through with and are monitored and reflected upon.

One of the experts underlines the universality of the objectives, and also underlines the focus of the particular section which centers around human rights education and the work with schools. The improvement of the situation of the target cases is one of the core objectives mentioned by the experts. One other goal is “*to mobilize as many Amnesty groups as possible*”. This goal is based on two rules: “*(1) the more letters, the greater the pressure on governments to better protect human rights in their country, (2) the participants see that they can make a difference together*”. This is therefore in line with the objectives of the campaign.

Further, the campaign seeks to benefit human rights defenders and other cases by strengthening them through support, by protecting “*rights of people in distress and danger*” and by terminating injustices.

4.9.1. Awareness Creation

The German national section has a strong focus on the work with schools. This is out of an interest to give participants a chance to see that they can make a difference, and displays the general idea of using the campaign as a tool for human rights education. The “Briefmarathon an Schulen” (Write for Rights at schools) is often accompanied by focused media work and includes celebrity supporters and testimonials such as the German actress Jella Haase who was a godmother to the campaign in 2017 (Amnesty International Germany, 2017). With going into schools and involving students in the campaigns actively, the children and young adults are part of the awareness creation for the poor implementation of human rights in some parts of the world.

The awareness creation that the campaign aims at achieving is also a question of how to motivate participants and how to get them to participate in the first place. Factors listed focus on battling injustice thus *“being part of a global action”*. Participants are motivated to become active when having a personal connection or link, maybe being part of a diaspora themselves. Also, the preparation of the campaign materials offers a feeling of *“immediacy”* and a feeling of being able to contribute to a positive development in someone else’s situation. Ideally, the organization can create a shift in attitude of individuals by providing them with an understanding of the situation.

4.9.1.1. Communication Channels and Campaign Messages

There are various communication channels that the organization is able to pick and choose from in order to spread their campaign message. The experts underline that as Write for Rights is a global campaign the NGO uses *“all means of communication to reach to all of [their] supporters”*. This includes online based channels of all sort, campaign posters, e-mail newsletters, and letter via mail. Further they add that a variety of material is set up such as letter templates, case descriptions, flyers, and festival wristbands. The experts also mentioned a list of events that are used as communication channels: *“events in pedestrian zones, church, town halls, libraries, cinemas, advent bazaars, and schools”*. The experts indicate that the channels are chosen according to the audience. The messages that are created in the campaign are developed in a *“joint effort between the Write for Rights team and the relevant country teams [...] thus combining local and international considerations on what could be the most impactful messages”*. One expert also added that the messages are tested with each campaign year, in order to constantly develop and improve.

4.9.1.2. Follow up and updating the cases

Another aspect in the awareness creation is that Amnesty International monitors the campaign in order to supply the supporters and participants with updated information on the cases and in order to share success stories. One of the experts stated that as soon as developments of the cases are evident, they are shared through the website or the social media channels of the NGO. Also, monitoring the cases and evaluating the campaign allows country experts to *“take action in other campaigns and advocacy opportunities”*, making the campaign a learning for both, supporters but also the organization itself.

4.9.2. Make voices known in case of human rights violations

One of the campaign goals is to make voices known in cases of human rights violations. All experts discussed the usage of media work and channels of all type: websites, flyers, and

social media are a few of them to make the voices known. These messages are related to the audience through a channel which best suits the audience. Also, one other way is to put a face on the story by using *“quotes of the individuals of the selected cases and also their family members’ quotes”*. Getting voices known is combination of preparing the cases well and then using the right communication channels in order to reach the target audience. Also, the experts added that staying in contact with supporters helps to relay stories of human rights violations thus giving them a platform. Another channel of communication that is part of communication overall, is the Press Work of the International Secretariat and the National Sections. The Press Offices steer their outputs towards creating as big a platform as possible and by that getting more voices known.

4.9.3. Governments and authorities addressed

One of the other campaign goals is to address governments and authorities. The inherent set up of the campaign gives room for that by offering participants to write letters of appeal that are sent to government officials, authorities, or other people who might be able to influence the situation of target cases. The experts indicated that generally the governments and/or authorities do not usually provide a response or reply. In the rare cases where they do it is through embassies or high commissions. In some countries the campaign organizers receive an indirect response from the government. In one particular country, the human rights defenders or their family members were told that by the authorities that they (authorities) were aware of the actions taken.

As I had expected governments to be generally more active in response to the campaign by for example issuing press releases, I followed up with a asking about the preparation process for government’s response: whether there are standard documents or designated teams who then handle the continued communication. One expert argued that the usual practice for Amnesty International would be to *“issue private letters, public letters, public statements to the relevant government if there is no official government response”*, indicating how the campaign work includes several steps also outside of the core work of letter writing.

4.9.4. Express support for Human Rights Defenders

The last campaign objective is to get people to express support for human rights defenders. This objective relates to the first part of analysis, which showed a dominant presence of human rights defenders as cases selected. Having people express support for human rights defenders relates very well to the integration of the Write for Rights campaign within Amnesty International’s overall work. Other one-time campaigns also deal with the topic of human rights defenders, such as the campaign BRAVE (Amnesty International UK, 2019). This campaign,

along other examples, demonstrates an increasing focus of Amnesty International on raising awareness for the danger that human rights defenders all over the world are in, in order to gather more people that express their support for the activists.

It is significant to understand if activists reported back to Amnesty International after receiving solidarity letters. In some cases, the family members are addressed through solidarity letters if the activists cannot be reached, or if the family is very active and supportive of their cause. In cases where the human rights defender of the campaign is no more due to their work as an activist, the family members might continue the fight for a proper human rights implementation and justice. According to the experts there has never been negative feedback by any human rights defenders in response to the solidarity letters he or she has received. Positive examples however are numerous. In all of the cases with Chinese human rights defenders, the family members expressed their gratitude stating that *“they felt very much encouraged to continue their fight”*. Another positive example is of a young activist in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2015. He was released from prison in 2016 and shared his feelings about the messages of solidarity and support:

“The security forces in the first prison wondered at some point and asked me: ‘Who are you? Why are so many people talking about you?’ I also believe that this publicity has kept me from certain harassment. At some point I received the letters from Amnesty members and other NGOs - a beautiful experience that gave me hope. Because I knew, I’m not alone. I can only stress how important this support is for people who experience injustice and have to endure such a difficult situation” (Amnesty International Germany, 2016).

One expert points out that *“solidarity actions help to make [the] supporters to show their support to the human rights defenders and their family member of the Write for Rights cases”*. Another expert adds that the organization assumes that people who took part in the action have a sense of solidarity for the cases and have become even more aware of their own human rights. Further this expert stated that the solidarity is not only for cases in distant countries, but also among students themselves who partake in the campaign.

4.9.4.1. Case Selection

The pattern of cases that are selected are crucial in order to observe if there are set indicators for selecting a particular case. The analysis of collating the cases revealed similarities such as many of them being human rights defenders, similar topics that they fought and fight for, and situations they are in due to their work such as harassment by authorities for most of the cases.

It was therefore crucial to understand the motivation and the criteria that underlie the selection process of cases. As mentioned earlier, one of the factors to select a case is the proposal by the National Section of a particular country which is accepted or endorsed by the UK office. This proposal is based on the priorities of gender, age, and certain countries.

There are several other aspects that are considered when selecting cases. One of them is the situation of people that requires special attention to improve that particular situation. This becomes a relevant factor for choosing the case and also becomes the focus of the campaign. According to the expert this criterion works because with the campaign being able to generate an enormous amount of participants “*a special kind of pressure can be created*” putting governments under a lot of stress. The Individuals at Risk team strongly focused on the human rights impact as the top criterion for selecting cases.

Some of the criteria that all experts indicated as being considered in the process were the following - number of cases in a country generally and its proportional geographic distribution; a certain amount of information available about the case; a story to tell in order to connect with participants of the campaign; and an expectation of high response rates. Additionally, they also admitted that security concerns influence the selection process. Sometimes countries are targeted repeatedly because avoiding repetitive targeting of a country might lead to the government getting used to being a target. However this is not always the case, because Amnesty International remains neutral and always looks at the facts of the case and the possible impact that the organization can make on the cases. Some of the criteria are the budget of the campaign; preference of cases for human rights defenders and targeting countries in order to increase pressure.

One of the experts stated that they do not favor human right defenders, however they appear as “champions/ pioneers” and are a thorn in the eye of governments or institutions. The expert continued that human rights defenders are under increasing pressure and need international support.

4.10. Factors for success

According to the experts there are a number of factors that lead to a successful campaign.

4.10.1. Human rights impact

The objectives of the campaign, that are consistently communicated, focus on “human rights impact for the individuals featured”. One of the experts states that one of the indicators for success is the “*human rights impact for the individuals*”. Also, the past years have apparently

shown satisfying levels of improvement of situations of cases. This is also the main goal that the organization seeks to achieve: *“the human right impact for individuals”*. The results that Amnesty International tries to achieve take us back to the campaign objectives and again underline the focus on individual people and improving their situation. In other words, the NGO tries to *“have impact on the ground”* by seeing people release from prison, charges being dropped, or harassment being stopped. Looking back at the campaign goals, this works through generating as many letters as possible but also as fast as possible, making speed and promptness another success factor.

4.10.2. Quantitative aspects – the numbers

In contrast to that one expert underlined a stronger focus on numbers and feasible data: *“number of actions taken, number of people reached and the changes made for the cases”*. One of the sections has a monitoring grid that allows to measure success by: number of participating groups, letters per group and individual case, number of online participations, views, and social media activities, number of participating schools, letters per school and individual case, and number of solidarity letters versus appeal letters in total. The expert also referred to the releases of prisoners, the charges dropped against activists, and generally the situations that have improved over the last years that the campaign has been carried out. When looking for not successful campaigning or negative outcomes, all experts unanimously replied that there have been no negative consequences in any of the cases thus far.

4.10.3. Motivation of staff

One of the other factors for success is the motivation of the staff. According to one of the experts, motivating staff is fairly easy because of the campaign's high success factors, namely being able to gather millions of people to support and participate.

4.10.4. Impacting States to uphold human rights

Another factor for success is to influence the stakeholders to bring a change in the situation of human rights violations. One of the experts argued that they seek to influence the governments or other stakeholders, as those are the people in power: *“[They] should know that everywhere in the world they see that they do not adequately protect human rights in their country. The pressure on them should be so great that this changes for the better”*.

4.10.5. Selection of cases

In my work prior to the questionnaire and after looking at analysis part one, I came to expect that the selection of cases must be an important aspect of the campaign's success or failure. However, to my surprise one expert said that the 'choice of case' does not influence the

success or failure at all. Another expert argued that this depends on the definition of success or failure: *“Even for more difficult cases, such as human rights defenders’ cases in authoritarian regimes, we also have detailed indicators to evaluate what impact, no matter how that would be, we have made or whether our efforts have contributed to significant changes”*.

4.10.6. Campaign induced changes and improvements

Asking the experts for changes that the campaign generally has brought about two of them mentioned very specific cases. One of the experts referred to a case of the 2015 campaign:

“more than half a million people had supported the case for the protection of girls and young women from forced marriages in Burkina Faso. This international pressure quickly became effective: The Ministry of Justice confirmed that the government felt obliged to abolishing early and forced marriages. The ministry said it was forced to take this step after ‘letters, e-mails, and messages from people all over the world arrived’ ”.

The expert added that *“this was only the first step, implementation, especially in rural areas needs to be stepped up”*. In another case, as result of the campaign, the human rights defender in focus received an improved treatment by the authorities where the human rights defender Ni Yulan was able to meet her daughter and the police official monitoring Yulan were more friendly to her and her family and stopped putting pressure on them to move to other places in Beijing.

The above examples indicate the opportunity of policy change but also changes on an individual level. Focusing on China, the expert stated that the campaign only causes very little policy changes. The example from Burkina Faso is along the lines of overall policy areas that have seen changes according to the expert. The expert stated that: *“Women’s Rights, Discrimination, Marriage and Family (Article 2, 12, 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)”* are the areas that have seen change due to the campaign.

4.11. Factors that need improvement

According to the experts, there are several factors in the Write for Rights campaigns that need improvement. The following are some of the factors mentioned by the experts.

4.11.1. Strategy for cases related to urgent matters

One of the factors mentioned is time management. Despite the routine that the campaign has established over the years there are still moments where time is an issue for the staff. One case is when *“a person campaigning for is threatened with torture or even the death penalty*

or urgently needs medical attention". This might happen to a chosen case in the process of preparing the campaign. Then the pressure needs to be rapid. The launch date of the campaign however always remains constant and is scheduled for December of each year. Despite having the fixed campaign timeline, the action for those specific cases continues even after the official timeframe is over. Amnesty International often continues with following up on cases and also pleads to still delivering letters of participants that arrive later.

4.11.2. Increase in budget

Another factor was regarding an increased budget. Such an increase in budget could allow to include more "*visual content*" in order to make the campaign "*more engaging*". Technical issues or improvement of IT are a factor as well. Only one expert answered, saying that the campaign website is refreshed every year in order to continuously keep it up to date.

4.11.3. The challenge of presenting complex situations in a simple manner

One of the factors that needs improvement is the presentation of cases and preparation of material. According to the experts, presenting people's situation is often complex. It therefore remains challenging to communicate them accurately and yet understandably so that even people see the need for intervention. These people are the ones who do not deal with the political and human rights situation in certain countries on the daily basis. Therefore to present these complex situations in a simplified manner is a challenge and remains a factor that might need improvement.

4.11.4. Cooperation with local partners

One of the observations from the analysis of collated material of Write for Rights campaign was its lack of cooperation with local partners. Incidentally one of the experts suggests that this is a factor which could be improved. While Amnesty International advocates for cooperation with local partners, it is challenging to find partners that share the same objectives to consistently communicate an issue with one voice.

4.12. Unintended consequences or unforeseen circumstances

Another aspect of factors that need improvement or points that need further evaluation in the future are unintended changes. One of the experts revealed that sometimes the individuals of particular campaigns experience an increase in online abuse due to their exposure to the public. This leaves room for better protection or preparation of individuals being chosen. Also, sometimes the person picked as a case is released prior to the campaign start date. When that happens they are replaced with a different case that still needs help in a more severe situation. This is not necessarily something that can be improved or worked with but underlines

the unpredictable nature of case situations that relates to many factors such as the political and economic situation in the country. These are external factors that Amnesty International cannot influence but has an impact on the cases of the campaign.

4.13. Special features and emerging concerns

Relating to the first part of analysis, some features stood out. The interesting imbalance of cooperation with partners is also to some extent reflected in the second part of the analysis as just mentioned above when looking at factors that need improvement.

4.13.1. Cooperating with partners

When it comes to cooperating with local partners for the campaign, one of the experts stated that local partners are only considered when necessary, meaning “*when relevant to individual campaign strategies*”. Also, one expert argued that since Amnesty International pleads to being politically neutral, the cooperation with partners is aggravated, because the NGOs own messaging needs to remain in the focus. Local organizations often follow certain political agendas and goals, and are involved or concerned with domestic politics. Nevertheless, one expert argued that involving local partners can help with reaching out to “*others who are not supporters and members*”. When using information provided by other organizations, the Country Experts of Amnesty International always cross-check and make sure the information provided is reliable. Also, experts outside of Amnesty International are only consulted for the Write for Rights campaign if they have specific knowledge or skills regarding a certain case, and if they are familiar with campaigning generally.

Consulting other big international NGO and governmental organizations is sometimes part of the Write for rights campaign work. For instance, the European Parliament was contacted in order to promote the campaign and to increase participation of parliament members. One expert pointed out that information is sent to UN agencies and the European Parliament. Then the “*advocacy colleagues at the UN and the EU also help to advocate the cases in bilateral and multilateral meetings*”.

One of the experts highlighted the difficulties or even impossibility of cooperating with local partners, especially in certain countries. The only way of consulting people outside of the NGO without putting anybody in danger or harming anyone is seeking “*advice from human rights defenders [...] in private communications*”, meaning that activists are consulted and contacted as individuals, outside of their possible involvement with other human rights organizations. Their input for specific cases can then be taken into consideration.

In general, the contact with local communities and individuals is generally established through researchers' contacts. In other cases, people turn to Amnesty International themselves when seeking support in case of abuses, then develop a long-term relationship with the NGO. Human rights lawyers in many different countries are in touch with the organization.

4.13.2. A recurring campaign

The Write for Rights campaign clearly sets itself apart from other Amnesty International campaigns by being the only campaign that is repeated each year since 2002. Given the repetition and years of experience, certain routines have developed and the campaigning team does not have to start from scratch each year: *"It is the most organized and biggest annual campaign"*. The campaign offers a lot of advantages that come together due to its routine and repetition. Knowing the dates that it will be carried out at each year allows the International Secretariat and the National Sections to include the campaign in their annual planning. The campaign also enables Amnesty International to embed it within other campaigns or connect themes. The "Brave" campaign was one way to include Write for Rights within an overall topic of protecting human rights defenders (Amnesty International Australia, 2019). Since the cases that are chosen are in part proposed by national sections this also allows for integrating the campaign within Amnesty International's work generally. Additionally, very specific country or theme focuses can be set due to its systematic nature.

4.14. Conclusion to Analysis Part II

Reaching out to many people did not result in the desired amount of feedback and contribution to the research. Nevertheless, the three experts that did answer offered insightful input and responses to the interview guide. Given that they are all located in different countries and work on different topics in their position as Amnesty International staff, the answers covered a variety of aspects and experiences. Sometimes specific examples guided the understanding of certain aspects and added to a more feasible picture.

4.15. Conclusion to overall analysis

The data collected in total is able to contribute to the field of research in various ways. First, the Write for Rights campaign has – to my knowledge – not been analyzed by an academic scholar before.

In the interpretation chapter, I as the researcher am able to reflect on assumptions made prior to the analysis. Most importantly the data from both parts of the analysis can be combined and put into perspective. Ideally, the interpretation and discussion of the data analyzed enables me to give a clear answer to the research question posed.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Now, after discussing the data collated in detail, it is time to interpret the analysis at hand. This final chapter is divided into five parts. First, the results are summarized and presented in a condensed manner. Second, a detailed discussion and interpretation of all the data collected in connection of the analysis within the bigger frame of the first two chapters, the history of Amnesty International and the literature review, is elucidated. Third, recommendations are made, based on the previous interpretation of results. This part of the chapter aims at facilitating new input for the field of research and to add a new body of knowledge to the discussion following with limitations and challenges encountered during the study. Ultimately a conclusion with scope for further research is presented.

5.1. Summary of Results

The previous chapter has shown an interesting analysis as a result of two bodies of data, first the data that was collated for the campaign years of 2015 to 2018, offers an overview of 44 cases that were chosen for the campaigns in that timeframe. The data allows to compare the cases, find similarities and differences, detect patterns, and to find special features that stand out. This work contributes to the field of research because even though all the materials are available online, it is not found in one place. Data was gathered in a systematic manner, collating information available in different locations. I would argue that many times a part of the analysis that a scholar conducts is of pioneer character because she or he chooses to work through data that is available and prepare it for the research and for their peers. There is evidence that there is a strong focus on human rights defenders as choice of case for the campaigns. Further, the human rights violated, and the issues raised were issues on freedom of speech, right to assembly, and conditions in prison or detention. Looking at the geographic distribution of cases, showed that the agenda of the campaign apparently does not expect a proportional distribution, since the cases were spread out rather unevenly across the continents, with Africa and Asia being dominant. The special feature standing out in this first part of analysis was the fact that cooperation with partners, whether that be local or other international organizations, is rather rare. Also, it became clear that in most of the cases there is an overlap of human rights that were violated and that there is no single focus on one human right. Nevertheless, some cases showed a strong focus on for example LGBTI rights and indigenous and land rights, even if the case included several overlapping issues.

The second part of the analysis focused on the campaign as a whole, looking for factors that are leading to a successful or unsuccessful campaign. The expert interviews offered some insightful responses. With more than a decade of experience of working with Amnesty International each, the experts represent well informed and experienced staff. The responses

also offered an insight into the challenges of working in different geographic locations. The experts provided an understanding of the campaign in the aspects they are most familiar with allowing for varied examples from the campaign. The experts highlighted the importance of human rights impact for individuals as the core of the campaign. This was reflected when asking for campaign goals, campaign objectives, campaign messages, and proved to be an indicator to measure a successfully campaign with. Generally, the impact for individuals, namely the cases chosen, was a common theme throughout the whole guide and also a measurement for success. Other success factors and indicators were mentioned as well as things that need improvement.

5.2. Interpretation of Data

The data revealed that the structural and strategic set up of the campaign is based on years of experience, making it a very unique campaign. This was evident prior to conducting the expert interviews due to the history of the campaign and all the literature on the same. Nevertheless the interviewed emphasized the importance of that routine in structure and the campaign. With the campaign being implemented in 2002 already, the staff is able to draw lessons from years of campaigning, while adapting to current developments with necessary changes. The first consequence from having an annual campaign in contrast to a campaign that is only carried out randomly is that there is a designated team set up around it. The Individuals at Risk team at the international secretariat in London coordinates the Steering Group and the Project Group. Further, from my internship experience with the German National Section and the input of the experts, it is evident that often a designated person in the National Section overlooks the campaign. There are additional factors that influence who else is involved with the campaign.

5.2.1 Countries

In terms of countries that were chosen for the campaign, there were no recognizable patterns in terms of distribution of cases across countries and continents, nor focus on certain groups of people more than others, or anything alike. This finding along with the expert interviews highlighted that the selecting process for cases is based on a constant communication between the Individuals at Risk team and the National Sections (people within the National Section being responsible for the Write for Rights campaign). It still leaves an open question on why the geographical distribution is not proportional. The imbalanced representation of countries relates to Mutua's Savage-Victim-Savior (SVS)-metaphor (Mutua, 2001). Mutua indicates that it is problematic to depict the state as the savage, while the organization, in this case Amnesty International, claims to be the savior. Given that the International Secretariat is

located in London and the organization was founded in Europe, this organization also at first looks fits the description of a Europeanized “savior”.

The results of this study tie comply with Smith’s research which showed that the geographical distribution of international NGOs is contradicting with the issues they are trying to fight (Smith et al., 1998). Smith underlined that while the Global South is the place where most human rights violations happen, the NGOs are generally located elsewhere. This goes along with Mutua’s SVS metaphor and shows how NGOs make themselves the savior, that operates from afar, trying to impact the savage, the state of a far away and not-Western country. The results from this study indicate a similar pattern, with a domination of African and Asian countries in contrast to Europe and the Americas.

5.2.2 Case Selection – Making Voices known in Case of Human Rights violations

The expert interviews showed that the selection of cases is less based on certain patterns, rather on proposal of the National Sections. This perhaps allows for a certain amount of flexibility in the preparation of the campaign.

Given that there is a strong core team with much experience and expertise the campaign has a solid foundation. Nevertheless, it is still able to adapt to the unique agenda or focus of each year. As soon as the cases are chosen, the Write for Rights team gets in touch with the respective country experts in order to collect all the information necessary. This flexibility perhaps allows the organization to achieve maximum output in preparation for the campaign. As one expert underlined, the process of selecting cases begins with National Sections and individual Amnesty International staff proposing cases. This means that the Write for Rights team is able to pick cases that knowingly have already received a lot of media coverage in a country that knowingly deals with an issue that is important globally or locally, that they can choose cases based on trending topics such as LGBTI rights. The organization is able to steer the topics and prepare the cases to the maximum in order to have a campaign that is as successful as possible. The replication of the campaign annually has allowed Amnesty International to constantly improve without starting from scratch each time.

As the analysis showed, and as the experts underlined the correct preparation of campaign materials is crucial to the campaign. Being able to quote the individuals chosen and to put faces on the case creates a connection with the participants. As Neier’s study (Neier, 2012) showed earlier, the individuality of each case underlines that the victims are not only numbers but that they are people. Also, Chapman and Fisher showed that an effective campaign uses a story that creates “heroes or heroines” (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 155). I find this to be

true in the case of Write for Rights. The campaign materials for schools specifically underline the importance of creating a connection between participant and case. They do so by using the stories of individuals, adding pictures to them, and picking out details that children (but also adults) can relate to.

As one expert indicated, the NGO tests their campaign message each year in order to constantly improve and get better. This demonstrates how the goal of making voices known is underlying all of the output the campaign produces. I consider the testing of messages to go along with the selection of cases, trying to create the most engaging campaign possible. Making voices known is generally a strategy Amnesty International uses in order to gather large amounts of people to support the campaign. However, the state of the art also showed how naming and shaming can backfire. Sometimes authoritarian leaders will use excessive force in “response to international pressure” (Hafner-Burton, 2008, p. 691). Further, there might be negative consequences for the individuals that are made a case. There is a record of cases being publicly shamed due to receiving more media exposure through the campaign. The increased media attention does not only attract people who want to participate and support the consequences.

This knowledge can be used along with other experiences from the campaigns, which show which styles of campaign material, presentation of cases, and addressing governments causes which outcomes. It is a positive aspect when experts stated how committed the organization is to constantly improving their materials, trying to achieve high participation rates each year, and also trying to reduce unwanted negative causes. It is however also observed that there is a differing amount of data and the different types of output produced each year. Also, different National Sections provide different documents and materials, possibly depending on their focus – some might work more with Amnesty International groups, others with schools. This inconsistency is contradicting with the overall professionalism the campaign is tackled with.

5.2.3 Strategic Planning and Campaign Objectives

Since the campaign involves many people outside of the core group and the project team, I believe it is hard to pin down the exact numbers for a budget. Many of the staff contributing to the campaign are not on the Individuals at Risk payroll, but rather full time employees at National Sections or usually work in other sections at the London office. However, since the campaign is carried out annually, it can easily be considered in the budgeting process and receive its fair share from the overall campaigning budget. Also, the involvement of country experts that are located elsewhere than London allows for an optimal use of human resources

and the interconnections of a global organization. It makes use of the idea of a global NGO that has location and staff in many countries in the world.

Further, letting staff from respective countries contribute seems to strengthen the integrity and motivation of staff. The campaign bears quick rewards as feasible success can be measured in data like numbers of participants. I believe that this certainly adds to the success of the campaign, especially looking at it from an internal perspective. Since the campaign is so well known and draws on years of history every staff member can imagine what it is about. After monitoring and evaluating the campaign, all staff members can engage with the issues and understand the quantitative outcome and compare it to other years. This is a huge advantage in contrast to other campaigns, that remain solely in the campaigning department and that staff from let's say the fundraising section is not really involved with. Write for Rights not only enables Amnesty International to gather millions of supporters worldwide, it also allows their own staff to carry out a practical task of fighting for human rights. Often, the National Sections contribute to the campaign by hosting letter writing marathons. The respective national groups do the same, sometimes organizing events with churches or other institutions. This demonstrates a universality of the campaign. It creates an impact and allows people who are not actively involved in human rights issues to participate and be part of a campaign, a human rights issue

This study demonstrates how the Write for Rights campaign can be a tool in human rights education. For instance, in Germany Write for Rights is used in schools in order to educate children. School children not only gain a feeling of solidarity for people in foreign countries but also understand the concept of human rights as a whole and ideally are able to apply it in their own life. In this area of human rights education the campaign can be used to foster its impact on the overall support of human rights defenders as well.

Given that Amnesty International themselves pick and choose campaign cases, the NGO is able to support its own agenda. In 2018 women human rights defenders were the focus of the campaign. The organization underlined the focus of their work by using Write for Rights as a platform. The campaign also goes along with other campaigns that focus on similar topics, for example the BRAVE campaign, which focuses on increasing the awareness for the poor situation that many human rights defenders all over the world are in. This shows another type of impact, namely how Write for Rights can contribute to Amnesty International's agenda at the time. There is an interrelatedness of the Write for Rights campaign, as an annual event, and campaigns that only happen once (over different periods of time). Further, as one expert underlined, the campaign is linked to the historical roots of Amnesty International's beginnings:

writing letters of appeal and solidarity to people, using the networks the organization has (cf. Urgent Actions Network), while attracting new supporters.

5.2.5 Policy Changes and Human Rights Impact

One of the other factors of success is the constant increase in the number of participants – individuals, schools. Another indicator of success is the “human rights impact for individuals”. Individual cases success lies within the scope of the campaign and any policy changes associated with it are achievements that go beyond the original goal of the campaign. The campaign puts the individual at the center of focus.

Looking at the campaign induced changes earlier in the analysis, one example showed the very desirable outcome of policy change, while the other demonstrated an improvement on an individual level. The latter goes just along the lines of the overall goal of positive human rights impact for individuals. It shows that both outcomes are possible and both have happened in the past, however I conclude that the improvement of a situation on individual level is a much more frequent consequence than policy changes. In fact, there was only one single positive example of policy change that was mentioned in the expert interviews. In the case of Burkina Faso the campaign asked for a ban of forced marriage and the government ultimately changed their policy. However, as the expert pointed out already, the implementation is lacking in the rural areas especially. This shows how the implementation of policy changes can be tedious and slow, meaning that the individuals affected by the policy might continue suffering from poor implementation of human rights, while on paper they should benefit from an improved situation.

This also helped me understand that a more narrow focus on individual situations is not only more feasible but also something that can be achieved easier and quicker. The implementation of a new policy in rural areas for example can take months, or years even, if the area is really poorly developed. Also, the goal of an individual improvement is not only much more feasible but also more realistic. It is easier to steer and to control. Also, policy change is part of political work overall, including many actors within the government and usually requiring lobby work as well.

Taking into consideration what the outline of the state of the art has shown, the results of the analysis do not necessarily go along with the research of naming and shaming, as all the experts did not elaborate much on the interaction with governments that might have responded to the campaign. The literature of naming and shaming has been tackled earlier in the review of literature. The underlying logic of the boomerang model implies “that a domestic group

should reach out to international allies to bring pressure on its government to change its domestic practices” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p. 36). The results however revealed that the response rate of governments seemed to be relatively low on the one hand, and not along the lines of naming and shaming narratives on the other. I initially considered the Write for Rights campaigns to be a naming and shaming campaign, and I still believe that to some extent this is true. However, as mentioned numerous times now the naming and shaming in the campaign is in order to achieve individual impact in the first place. This means that the previous research of naming and shaming looks at different patterns. The boomerang and spiral model to my understanding both look at much larger scale issues, which then cause the entire government to respond to a large topic. In the case of individuals the governments can respond faster, with less effort, and with less need to make overall changes or adjustments to the human rights situation in the entire country.

Something the organization however is able to and, as the data shows has done, is to impact the relations between groups of people. As Stachowiak underlined, “efforts are focused on working with the many, not the few” (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 20), arguing that grassroots movements are able to push for social change by mutually taking action. The campaign is a prime example of generating a big public that joins forces. This also goes back to the idea of the letter writing marathon where people physically meet and write as many letters together as possible.

Taking the theory of change into consideration, the most interesting aspect to me was when one of the experts stated the same for campaign objectives and the indicators for success of the campaign, namely: “human rights impact for individuals”. This seems to demonstrate that the organization is well aware of what they want to achieve and then uses just that to measure the impact. Also, looking at the German experts’ input it shows again. With the German section focusing a lot on schools and their involvement in order to foster the human rights education, their monitoring process is very focused on quantitative outputs in terms of numbers of participation. They have a long list of numbers and data that they are collecting that then allows the German section to evaluate whether the campaign was successful from their point of view and based on numbers within Germany. The opportunity of using the campaign as a tool for human rights education seems logical, when looking at the expert’s statement that “human rights education is a priority. The goal is to win 10% of secondary schools in Germany in the medium term for participation in the campaign”. This clear set out goal underlines the way the campaign objectives are of overarching and general nature but can be broken down into really concrete and feasible goals. This demonstrates the levels and indicators of success and how the assessment of whether the campaign was successful is easy. Nevertheless, looking at the

changes that the campaign already brought about, in form of feasible examples such as the case in Burkina Faso, still indicates how much monitoring and following up is needed in order to measure long-term effects and long term success in contrast to a quick evaluation of success of numbers. This is true for both, scholars and Amnesty International themselves.

5.3. Recommendations

The recommendations are provided to strengthen the existing work of this campaign. Also these recommendations can be replicated by other organizations that campaign on human rights issues and to advance the cause of access to justice and rule of law. Having researched about the Write for Rights campaign and perhaps the first one to do it in an academic setting, the following are my recommendations.

I believe this topic remains a very important area of interest in the sphere of human rights NGOs and their work through campaigning. A possible topic of investigation could be to look at the policy changes created by the campaign. One way could be to set up a study that focuses on feasible (policy) changes that have already happened, picking small-scale examples and then monitoring those over a longer time span in order to evaluate the implementation. For example choosing the case of Burkina Faso and effects on forced marriage draws on the clear link of the campaign and the policy change the government was forced to carry out. Examples like these could reveal the implementation aspects of policy change. This would also highlight the long-term impact the campaign can have, especially outside of individual levels.

Another focus of this study could be a follow-up on the cases that were successful. Following up on previously successful cases that were part of the campaign and as such released from prison or freed from harassment can show whether the impact in long-term or rather short-term, while the world is watching. I strongly encourage further research that assess the available data and to include success stories provided by Amnesty International themselves in future research. Again, this will be a tedious work, since the information is not available in one place but needs to be collated diligently.

Despite being aware of its history and the years of experience that Amnesty International is able to draw upon, I have to admit the level of routine and repetition of processes that underpin the campaign set up came as a surprise to me. This refers to the International Secretariat in the first place, as I perceived the staff there to me most constant. I generally consider this something positive, as the experience enables efficient work. However, sometimes outside views are very important, because people from the inside tend to get routine-blinded.

Therefore, I would argue that an improved cooperation with partners is crucial, also in order to benefit from expert knowledge about important yet small details on-site. Maybe a partner cooperation can help to understand whether the government is the correct authority to address. Referring back to the Burkina Faso case of a successful policy change, it shows that the rural areas need to also implement the new policy. With the help of local partners this might be possible. As Fisher and Chapman already pointed out “[c]hanges in policy are not enough to ensure implementation and change at the grassroots; this requires additional activity such as monitoring, the use of appropriate tools, and also long-term project work” (Chapman & Fisher, 2000, p. 164).

Also, the organization should make a conscious effort to diversify the geographic locations from which the cases are picked. Amnesty International should not fall under the metaphor of the Savage, Victim and Savior where there is a tendency for human rights organizations to call the State the “Savage” and the organizations playing the “Savior”. As Mutua (2001) underlined, a genuine dialogue of human rights needs the SVS-metaphor to be abandoned. This might also include for Amnesty International to diversify their workforce even more. As the introduction and critiques of the organization showed, it is facing accusations of being Western-centric, run by dominantly white people, and lacking a healthy work environment. The process of diversification also relates back to the recommended increase of consulting local partners.

There could be more visual materials in the Campaign resources. Of course this is subject to funds for these campaigns. One of the activities of the campaign along with writing the letters from school and university students could be using their creativity for generating visual materials. This could take the form of a competition, where there could be a recognition provided for such an input. Also, the success reports of the campaign need serious improvement. In my perception not much focus was put on the in terms of letting the participants follow up on the cases. When participating in the campaign myself, there was no incentive provided that asked participants to keep in touch in order to follow up on the cases. If the budget allowed it, one could host speaker tours of individuals that were released from prison due to the campaign. One could also create video messages with them that can then be shown to the children in schools specifically, in order to demonstrate to them how their participation has helped.

Amnesty International is a pioneering organization in case of human rights and there are academics who wish to study the impact or assess the work. There should be adequate support provided to advance the cause of research in the academic field. This includes placing all materials related to the Write for Rights campaign under one designated section on the

Amnesty International Website. This may be bifurcated based on issues and topics, but it would be very beneficial for everyone to locate data in one place.

5.4. Limitations of the study

The lack of funds and the constrained time frame at hand limited the study in its scope. The lack of financial means did not allow me to travel. Had that been an option there might have been a chance of getting in touch with Amnesty International's international secretariat in London in order to conduct an extensive face-to-face expert interview. Conducting the interviews via e-mail was a solution that was applicable and sufficient, however the response rate was dissatisfying.

The impact of such a campaign ideally would need a large-scale study. This study can be considered as a first step to provide a scope for such a large-scale study where the long-term effects of the campaign could be analyzed. Further, a large scale study could also tighten the methodology in terms of conducting a survey and then in-depth interviews with relevant actors. This could also include some of the individuals for whom the campaign was held.

5.5. Conclusion

Concluding this study, there are four core points that emerged. With all the data at hand I was able to answer the research question: to explore and understand the impact of a Write for Rights campaign.

Generally, through the collation of campaign data, and through conducting expert interviews, I was able to understand that the campaign focuses on having an

- Positive human rights impact.

Ultimately, the expert interviews especially have shown that the campaign has the goal of impacting the situation of individuals. It does so by creating a public that supports their cases, sends solidarity letters to express their support, but also calls out the people responsible with writing appeal letters. Hence, I explored the positive human rights impact and was able to understand that:

- Write for Rights is able to have a human rights impact for individuals, meaning their individual situation can be improved. This shows when looking at examples of people being released from prison, being treated better in prison or detention, and of cases where the harassment against these individuals stopped.

This is in contrast to the third point I would like to make. Exploring the impact on the human rights implementation in a country overall, it showed that this is not often achieved. This is because:

- policy changes are not at the core or focus of the campaign goals.

The last point, regarding exploring and understanding the impact, is the impact Write for Rights has on the people that participate, but also vice versa the impact of the people that participate. A success factor is that as many people as possible participate in the campaign. Every year the amount of actions taken is counted with “the total number illustrating the level of concerns” (Amnesty International, 2001 p. 118). It became evident that Amnesty International expects

- a correlation between the amount of people taking part in the campaign and the success of the campaign: therefore trying to increase the numbers of participants each year.

Thus coming back to Richelieu, the pen seems to be mightier than the sword: it can provide a positive impact on the overall human rights situations with reference to the Write for Rights campaign.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

The Impact of “Write for Rights” Campaigns on Human Rights Situations – A Case Study of Amnesty International

Interview Guide for Key Experts

Date	:
Time	:
Name	:
Years of experience (Human Rights)	:
Organization	:
Position	:

1. How are the Write for Rights campaigns planned and monitored?
2. How are the objectives set for this campaign?
3. How do you choose the human resources who will work for and with the campaign?
4. How do you motivate your staff for the campaign?
5. What skills of leadership are relevant for the campaign to move forward?
6. How do you manage and allocate resources for the Write for Right campaigns?
7. How do you integrate the Write for Rights campaign in your overall work?
8. How is the Write for Rights campaign different from other Amnesty International campaigns?
9. What are the strategies to develop campaign messages?
10. What communication channels (The Internet, Campaign Posters, E-Mail Newsletters and Letters via Mail) do you choose for the campaign? Based on what criteria do you pick the particular communication channels?
11. When/ In what situations do you choose to work on cases with partners/ local organizations?
12. What are the benefits of working with local partners / not working with local partners?
13. Is the information from local partners reliable?
Yes No
Reasons:
14. What external experts do you consult for this campaign (other than local organizations)?
15. How do you make voices known in case of human rights violations?
16. What are the criteria for the selection of the cases that are central to the Write for Rights campaign? Please give examples.
17. Please indicate if any of the following criteria are considered when selecting cases, ticking off several is possible:

Criteria considered when selecting cases	YES	NO
Do you look at the number of cases in a country generally/ a proportional geographical distribution?		
Do you consider the budget when choosing cases?		
Do you target countries again in order to increase pressure?		
Do you avoid targeting countries again in order to avoid the government getting used to being targeted?		
Do you base your decision on having a certain amount of information on the case?		
Do you choose a case based on the story it has to tell in order to connect with participants of the campaign?		
Do security concerns of cases influence your decision?		
Do you pick cases for which you expect a high response rate?		
Do you prefer cases that deal with human rights defenders?		

18. How does the '*choice of case*' influence the success or failure of the campaign?
19. What are some of the factors that influence people to write letters for Write for Rights campaign?
20. Have you received responses from governments in regards to the campaigns?
Yes No
If yes, can you provide examples for when you received direct response from governments?
21. Has there been negative consequences in any of the cases?
Yes No
If yes, can you provide an example?
22. What are the preparations that Amnesty International need to take in advance in order to respond to government response? (In terms of capacity, resources, intelligence, communications and logistics) Please provide examples.
23. Do you contact United Nations Institutions, the European Union and/or other multilateral organizations for support of appeals?
Yes No
If yes, can you provide some examples?
24. What changes did the operation generally bring about in countries? Can you provide examples of changes that have happened?
25. What are the types of specific policy related change that occurred? Could you please provide examples of the types of policy change?
26. What are the rights that have been affected due to policy change?

27. Have you received positive and negative feedback from the cases in regards to solidarity messages they received?
 Yes No
 Can you provide examples?
28. Have you received negative feedback from the cases in regards to solidarity messages?
 Yes No
 Can you provide examples?
29. How did you establish contact and maintain the contact with local community, local officials, community leaders and faith-leaders?
30. Is time an issue in this campaign?
 Yes No
 Why?
31. Can you provide example of a case where you would have needed the campaign to run longer to gain more participants for a better outcome?
32. Have you felt that you could have been prepared better for a certain campaign?
 Yes No
 Can you provide an example?
33. What could be improved in the cooperation with local partners?
34. Are there logical or IT issues that you face during these campaigns?
 Yes No
 How can these be improved?
35. Can you provide any examples of cases where the approach was not tailored enough but rather based on previous experience?
36. Can you provide examples of unintended changes or consequences due to the Write for Rights campaign?
37. What are some of the things that one could overall improve in Write for Rights campaign?
38. What are some of the indicators of the success of the Write for Rights campaign?
39. What results are you seeking to achieve?
40. Who are you seeking to influence or benefit through this campaign?
41. What arrangements are made to follow up on the cases/ the campaign in general?
42. How did the campaign impact relationships between groups of people among the society or impact cultural patterns and norms that relate to human rights? What positive social impacts did you create?
43. What are some of the attitude changes that occurred due to this campaign?

Appendix II: Letter seeking permission for interview gathering



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To
Staff of Amnesty International
All Regions and Headquarters

Vienna 13 July 2019

Subject: Note on Research by Ms. Johanna Pelzer on “Write for Rights” campaign through University of Vienna

Dear Madam/Sir,

Greetings from Vienna.

The University of Vienna was founded in 1365 and is one of the oldest universities in the German-speaking world and one of the largest universities in Central Europe. One of the many programmes is the Erasmus Mundus Global Studies.

Ms. Johanna Pelzer is a student of the above Masters Programme. As a requirement for her Programme, she has to submit a thesis. Pelzer has chosen the topic “*The Impact of ‘Write for Rights’ Campaigns on Human Rights Situations - A Case Study of Amnesty International*”. The main objective of her research is to understand and explore the impact of a ‘Write for Rights’ campaign. The sub-objectives are to (1) to collate information and analyze the Write for Rights campaign and (2) to assess the factors leading to a (un)successful Write for Rights campaign.

I am a Lecturer at the Department of Development Studies, University of Vienna and Ms. Pelzer’s thesis supervisor. As an organization working in the area of human rights, I need not emphasize the importance of this research. Ms. Pelzer’s research will certainly add value and generate knowledge on this particular campaign. Ms. Pelzer would be happy to share the findings of the study with Amnesty International.

For the purpose of the study, she needs to conduct at least 10 interviews with staff of Amnesty International who are/were involved with the Write for Rights campaign. I am certain that the importance and relevance of such a research need not be emphasized to individuals working on a campaign such a Write for Rights. In this regard, I kindly request your cooperation and support to answer Ms. Pelzer’s questions. Please do not hesitate to contact me in case of further questions or clarifications.

Truly,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "R. Mary George".

Dr. Reena Mary George

Appendix III: Analysis part I

Collation of Write for Rights					
	Key elements				
Sr. Nr	Issues Raised in the Campaign	Right(s) violated	Chase characteristics (people/groups which the case is part of)	Country	Working area/ Focus of person or group targeted
...	...	...	...	...	
...	...	...	...	...	

For the full table of analysis, please see the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ix9WX6uCPcruP1pFeZcEBvadzPz09mFK>

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