

**An Analysis of Public Opinion as Presented on News
Networks' Pages on Facebook: Kony 2012 Campaign**

Houda Al Balushi

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university of other institution of higher learning.”

Signed: 
Date: 20 / 6 / 2013

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination and exploration of the factors affecting the formation of public opinion during the Kony 2012 campaign. This research analyses an American-based campaign aimed at raising awareness of the issue of Ugandan child soldiers, even though the latter has not been an issue for the last six years. The campaign, which started in March 2012, sparked considerable controversy among politicians, socialists, economists and the general public in attempt to frame the issue. This work takes the stance that the global community is involved in and exposed to unlimited sources of knowledge for building their own counter-frames, and that the development of public opinion can be tracked through the exploration of cable news networks' pages on Facebook.

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) has been used in this research as a methodological framework due to its flexibility as a research method, as well as applying elements of content analysis and intertextual analysis. Due to CDA's critical nature, insights can be given into why changes take place, and thus interpreting them is rendered possible. Content analysis of 16 posts by four cable news networks and 1,000 comments by audiences was conducted to examine how the subjective tone of coverage by news networks, the public, and their social networks affected the formation of public opinion. In order to gauge the impact of these factors, the researcher measured opinions that the public expressed by comparing them to the posted news by each news network separately. Several tables, graphs, and images have been employed to draw a picture of how public opinion developed over a period of two weeks.

The key findings of this study show how the framed news can affect how the public perceives events by making some issues more salient than others. Moreover, the audiences' identities and their social networks, or on the online public sphere, affect the perception of framed news and consequently, public opinion; both factors affect each other. It was also found that the manner in which these factors affect each other cannot be predicted because the latter is dependent on other variables that cannot be controlled, including individuals' preferences and interests, identity, culture,

ideology, values, beliefs or frames of references in general. Most important, however, is the finding that online public opinion is not independent of offline public opinion: they interact, which is further proof that the hypodermic needle effect of news is overrated and outdated. News media are influenced as much by public opinion as they influence it.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context of Research

From the earliest times, the symbolism of public opinion has been viewed as bearing the marks of balancing interests (Lipmann, 1922). These interests were evolved around conflict, hesitation, choice and compromise. Beyond this symbolic view, Lipmann (1922) believed that public opinion analysis can be conducted by recognizing the triangulation of the relationship between the scene of action, the human picture of that action, and the human response to that picture. What this research investigated is similar to what Lipmann portrayed in his work, but with further complicated details that are imposed by the globalised world that we live in today.

This research explored how public opinion of an awareness campaign was formed on news networks pages on Facebook, and what factors might have contributed and affected the formation of that opinion. It was important to see whether Facebook is a revolutionary medium (Anderson, 2011) and, because it is supposed to be free from state censorship and media influence, it can be a rational public sphere. People post news links on Facebook from blogs, YouTube, and news media websites. With the recent movement of cable news networks to Facebook and the news networks' constant pursuit of the opinion poll, the former becomes a rich field of public opinion.

Public opinion, with its long history cannot be limited to a certain field of study. What makes public opinion interesting to study is its relationship to political discourses; but political discourse can take place in many political forums. The researcher found that it is interesting to focus on the political movements; however again the collective action theories date back to more than 76 years (Institute for Homeland Security Solution, 2009). That is why the researcher shifted focus to the political movements expressed on social networking sites (SNS). At the time of writing the proposal, there were many political internet-based movements like the "Arab Spring". However, this was difficult to study because the Arab Spring was driven by numerous factors, namely political, economic, and religious motivations, and until 2013, the conditions are not stable (country dependent). In addition, of course, not all Arab countries have the same culture.

Therefore, the researcher shifted to the virtual sphere and found the topic of the American-based campaign “Kony 2012”. This campaign was designed to raise awareness of the crimes of the Ugandan war criminal, Joseph Kony, who for more than 25 years kidnapped children: males to work as soldiers; and girls to be sex slaves. The video was uploaded by the Invisible Children (IC) charity organization on YouTube on March 5, 2012. The video sparked strong controversy among global audiences, celebrities, media outlets, politicians, public relations practitioners, and other non-profit organizations. The video called for the intervention of the United States of America to solve the Ugandan issue. The campaign was heavily criticized for lacking the Ugandan voice, and for providing information that was outdated and misleading. The campaign was also criticised for how the donation was utilised. The non-profit campaign targeted the public to elicit support for USA military intervention in Uganda.

Since this study was looking at public opinion on cable news network’s pages on Facebook, the first question that the researcher will answer in this thesis is how cable news networks influence the public, and consequently the formation of public opinion. The IC states in the video, "The problem is 99% of the planet doesn't know who he is. If they knew, Kony would have been stopped long ago. Let the world; let the international community take justice "(invisiblechildreninc, 2012).

The campaign mediated a human crisis to the public worldwide telling them who Kony is; as conveyed in the last quote. Public members already constitute the audiences for news networks all over the world. The research focused primarily on the subjective media tone represented in framing for two reasons, as discussed by Schulz and Roessler (2012). In the 1970s, the idea of objective media was identified as an illusion. Second, individuals are exposed to hundreds of news outlets and news which is updated every second so they can select whatever suits their interests and needs, which means that the selective exposure is also subjective (Schulz & Roessler, 2012).

The second objective of this research was to determine whether audiences of cable news networks (who have different frame of references as well as social environments) have an impact on how individuals perceive the issue and consequently public opinion. This thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of public opinion in a socio-political context, so considerably more work is expected. Qualitative research of public opinion appears to be inadequate in current public opinion studies (Burstein,

1998). Finally, a new way of expressing opinion on Facebook represented in pressing the “like” button was addressed as not all people express their opinions or write comments to identify their opinions. There has been little discussion on why or what motivates individuals to click “like” on Facebook to express their opinion. In order to find out the reasons, the researcher reviewed the aspect of the most liked comments.

The questions of this research were:

1. How do news networks on Facebook affect the formation of public opinion?
2. How do public’s characteristics and their social networks (social environment) affect perception of news and consequently the formation of public opinion?
3. What motivates Facebook users to click “like” on certain comments as a way of public opinion expression?

With reference to the three objectives that this thesis aimed to achieve, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was adopted as a framework to examine how the participants (public) receive news; how they position themselves in relation to their social networks (social environment); and how that affects public opinion formation. In other words, adopting a CDA framework assisted the researcher in investigating the internal relationships among the individual/ private opinions which form the public opinion on an issue. Context-related aspects included in CDA are namely language, ideology and dominance, which will be taken into account, but will not be studied in-depth as to not divert attention from media framing and the public which were the main factors examined in the present research. Alternatively, it was proposed that context-related terms would help in determining the specific discourses used by participants and media, in order to disseminate the specific ideas that public opinion is based on.

1.2 Research Perspectives and Aims

Public opinion research instruments like polls can “capture moment in time, not ultimate truths about what people believe and think” (Ferguson, 2000, p. 9). For decades, quantitative research methods such as surveys provided trusted data about voting trends and political attitudes toward the political campaign; but these methods did not show how these trends developed and the consequences of adopting these opinions. Studying public opinion qualitatively is not an easy task. In light of the power

that public opinion polls wield in the media, public opinion should be studied with caution, along with an enthusiastic dose of creativity. It is imperative to formulate thoughtful understanding based on evaluating the elements that exist in the context of public opinion. Scheufele and Moy (2000) emphasize that formation of public opinion is a complicated process as there are no criteria to distinguish rational and irrational opinions. Thus, the primary objective for analysing public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign was to gain qualitative insights into the process of public opinion formation with assistance of the quantitative analysis which is illustrated visually in the findings chapter.

Political surveys are facing considerable challenges as a consequence of constant societal and technological changes. The networked population today is gaining more opportunities to engage in public affairs. Some public protests ultimately succeeded like those in Manila and Spain 2004, but there are also examples of political activities that failed such as the Red Shirt protests in Thailand in 2004 when the protesters who were organized by social media) occupied Bangkok, until they were dispersed by the government, resulting in dozens being killed (Shirky, 2011). As mentioned earlier, the Kony 2012 campaign is an American-based campaign that raised awareness of the Ugandan child soldiers issue to incite public opinion to support the USA military intervention in Uganda. Complications come from the fact that this campaign addresses US foreign policy accessed by a global public and are not specified by a geographical area.

Furthermore, emphasising and comparing the perceived accessibility to the online public sphere to the significance of SNSs in contemporary politics (Howard, 2005) may lull us into believing that the public sphere is different from the traditional public sphere (Howard, 2005; Papacharissi, 2002). In addition, the rhetoric concerning the potential of digital media aims to keep the public sphere healthy. At first glance, one may think that the public sphere on social networking sites platforms is free from any constraints; and that the social networks applications are available at any time and everywhere using tablets and smartphones applications. But not all people have access to the internet, so there is no choice other than adopting the instrumental view toward Facebook that considers social media as the cause of change while omitting other causes (Shirky, 2011). This view underestimates the significance of social media that allow citizens to interact among themselves; while overestimates the value of

broadcast media (Shirky, 2011). Facebook is only a medium for two ways of communication; thus, the focus of research was on cable news networks. However, cable news networks on Facebook still operate as a gate-keeping function and depend on “news values” to guide news gathering practice, which is governed by professional attitudes about what is fact or opinion; interesting or uninteresting; relevant or irrelevant; newsworthy or not (van Dijk, 1998). Thus, the reader might think that it would be better if the researcher studied public opinion on traditional media platforms. Conversely, with traditional media platforms, it was anticipated that the researcher would not be able to track the media-public conversation or the conversation among the audiences who perceive and comment on the same news. In other words, the researcher would not be able to see how certain discourse and opinions are developed, and under what circumstances.

The researcher took the stance of being critical to the public opinion on Facebook. Facebook is a medium that has resulted from the extremely rapid pace of global change, which makes tracking and keeping up with new developments difficult. Lerche (1998) maintains “our lives are increasingly influenced by forces which have transcended borders, and which, precisely because of their scope and power, are changing, irreversibly, life on this planet”. All aspects of contemporary societies have been reshaped. Being a graduate of an international communication major made the researcher qualified to look at all of these elements at the macroscopic scale, in order to draw a complete picture of the global climate of opinion; which unfortunately, cannot be studied in-depth in a one year thesis. Previous studies aided in facilitating an understanding of the argument and division of opinion among the participants who are from diverse nations and cultures, and thus to understand the text generated from the communication process on cable news networks’ pages.

In line with the researcher’s frame of reference, the researcher should be aware of her own subjectivities toward the topic. Being Middle Eastern and familiar with the aspects of the American intervention in Iraq was bound to have affected the way the researcher interprets public opinion of the campaign, so by being aware of such subjectivities and possible bias, the researcher was able to set them aside for achieving the purpose of this research.

This study explores public opinion in the context of framing of news and the influence of participants on news framing of the Kony 2012 campaign by the selected

news networks. Three international news networks were selected for measuring global public opinion, in addition to an American news network which was selected to see how the primary target of the campaign, the American public, viewed the Kony 2012 video.

The main limitations of this research were the limited access to data on Facebook pages, election of studied factors, and the time allocated for this study. The data gathered after a period of two weeks followed the initial coverage of news networks for the Kony 2012 campaign. New media outlets and Facebook users are frequently updating, editing, and sometimes deleting content of their posts. Secondly, studying the public and their social networks was restricted to the revealed identities and aspects, which were required to provide a comprehensive exploration of the reasons as to why certain audiences adopt certain attitudes. However, the researcher did not have the approval to track the audiences' profiles on Facebook. Moreover, the final limitation was the unlimited themes emerged from studying public opinion on Facebook, which diverted the attention of the researcher several times from the main factors intended to study in this research. Finally, the complicated nature of studying online mediated communication made it difficult to draw a representative sample of the population for content analysis. How to mine data, how much data, and which network to select were not easy decisions to make, as there were an unlimited number of media sources available online.

The study involved both manifest and imbedded data analysis of the sixteen news networks' postings and about 1,000 comments from audience members. CDA was used, as a framework, for this research. Despite the vagueness and potential partiality of the method, CDA can critically examine the language the participant used, positions they adopted, and the balance of power among relationships. Moreover, content analysis was used to analyse these posts and comments from the news networks' pages on Facebook; however, content analysis cannot describe the text meaningfully; thus, intertextuality was also employed.

1.3 Thesis structure

Following this introductory chapter discussing context, significances, and limitation of this research, Chapter two reviews the existing and relevant materials that motivated the research questions addressed for this thesis. Furthermore, Chapter two provides a

theoretical basis for the present study as it reviews the factors influencing public opinion from the perspectives of the classical and current theories and models.

Chapter three is a detailed explanation that depicts the methodological approach adopted in this research project. In order to understand the complicated meanings embodied in the multi-cultural text, CDA is used as a paradigm; and a combination of intertextuality and content analysis is used.

Key findings of the analysis of online posts and comments are presented in Chapter four which will be enhanced by several images, graphs, and tables to make it easier to understand how such findings were generated from the data.

Chapter five includes a detailed interpretation of the findings with reference to the literature review to identify the significance of this research in terms of the previous research findings, in order to enhance understanding of the nature of the online world-wide public opinion. Lastly, Chapter six summarises the key study findings, implications, and limitations, and how it contributes to the existing knowledge of public opinion.

A list of academic references will be provided in Chapter six. Efforts have been made to integrate classical and current literature about public opinion, public sphere, media effects, social environment, and individuals' threshold for expression.

1.4 Summary

In summary, this chapter has outlined the background and context of the present thesis, laid out the methodological approach adopted, and explained the structure of this research project. By providing what might be a guide to view this research, the reader can easily draw a mental image of the exploration of public opinion of the online Kony 2012 campaign. The next chapter will examine the key studies that work as a platform for the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The second chapter is a result of a wide literature review conducted over the course of this research. The review incorporated diverse fields such as media effects, social psychology, foreign policy, social networks, and public opinion theories and models. The presence of public opinion on cable news networks' pages on Facebook which works as a public sphere will be discussed. The chapter also presents and critiques the main theories and models of public opinion formation and expressions that focus on social networks and the selectivity of perception. Classic theories such as the Spiral of Silence of Noelle-Neumann (1974) (which should be in the "must read" list of social science researchers of public opinion) have been incorporated with new models like the Cascading Activation Model of Entman (2004), in order to provide a theoretically grounded account of public opinion formation. Studies of public opinion are inherent to history, and their significance may go beyond what Abraham Lincoln states in the following quote:

In this age, in this country, public sentiment is everything. With it, nothing can fail; against it, nothing can succeed. Whoever molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes, or pronounces judicial decisions (as cited in *The public perspective*, 1997, p. 2).

2.2 Public Opinion

Scholars in several disciplines have contributed to grasping how attitudes about public affairs are created, measured and communicated, but there is little agreement on a precise definition of public opinion (Donsbach & Traugott, 2008). The first idea that comes to mind about public opinion is the open exchange of political thoughts such as those that took place in ancient Greek agora or colonial town halls (Papacharissi, 2002). The word "public" has two related concepts; as a noun, it means a collective that shares mental representations, and as an adjective it describes the opinions that are associated with matters of common interests (Perrin & McFarland, 2011). Ferdinand Tönnies contends that the word "opining" means two things; either thinking in term of "harbouring judgment, an intention, or a point of view, or is a shortened expression for articulating or announcing an opinion" (Tönnies, Hardt & Splichal, 2000,

p. 133). Opinion can be used in the context of either as a private function, or publicly in an accessible observable open sphere (Tonnes et al., 2000; Papacharissi, 2002). Together, “public opinion” is about adequately representing the views of the public that are explicitly expressed (Perrin & McFarland, 2011; Tonnes et al., 2000) and connotes ideas of citizenship and things that are not private (Papacharissi, 2002). Intrinsically, the idea of public opinion is linked to democracy and the rule of law, and generally it is related to the citizens’ sovereignty, political representation, and constitutionally formal established way of representation in the decision making process in politics, as discussed by Tonnes et al. (2000).

2.2.1 Perspectives toward definition of public opinion in contemporary debate.

Acknowledging that public opinion is a history in itself means it is impractical to include literature of all related terms within a yearlong period thesis, so only the perspectives towards the definition of public opinion in the contemporary debate will be presented. These perspectives can be populist, that of social constructionists, or critical (Ferguson, 2000). The populist perspective asserts that information flows from those who have values, beliefs, and opinions about the government, which means that the role of media is only to facilitate two-way communication between state and existing audiences from the public. The perspective of social constructionists considers public opinion as a product of symbolic interaction in a society that involves language and is influenced by political discourse. From this perspective, public opinion is subject to manipulation by those who are in power (Ferguson, 2000). From the symbolic interaction with others, individuals form their political attitudes that can be sometimes flexible; or contradictory at other times. The critical perspective, on the other hand, is highly pessimistic because it views mass opinion as “elite opinion” (Ferguson, 2000, p. 9), and it argues that elites manipulate polls to achieve their own goals and interests, so public opinion is considered to be a drive to manipulate the general public (Ferguson, 2000). Early research of public opinion lacked a coherent structure, or the public followed the elite leadership naively; but more recently many scholars began to characterize public opinion as “a relatively stable and consistent counterweight that policy makers must, or at least should take into a consideration” (Baum & Potter, 2008,

p. 44). The elite in social media might be different as they can be categorised by having access to the internet or access to knowledge, for example.

The selected cable news networks have not multiplied the networks available in households only, but they are available online (Schulz & Roessler, 2012). The virtual representation of these media outlets does not make them different from traditional media. For instance, the traditional news values and gate-keeping are applied in online journalism, as mentioned by Allan (2006).

2.2.2 Significance of public opinion.

In the light of the need to take public opinion into consideration, it is imperative to investigate the status of public opinion. Glynn, Herbst, Keefe and Shapiro (1999) suggest that public opinion provides clues about culture and dictates the boundaries of a country's foreign policy. Moreover, it plays a major role in policy debates in domestic and foreign affairs. In democratic states such as the USA, policy should rest on public opinion (Glynn et al., 1999). Similarly, Noelle-Neumann (1995) affirms public opinion as rationality in a democracy, which makes it instrumental in the process of opinion formation and decision-making if we assume that rational decision-making is in fact possible. Furthermore, public opinion promotes social integration as a social control to ensure the consensus that actions and decision-making depend upon (Noelle-Neumann, 1995). Glynn et al. (1999) argue that respect for public opinion works as a safeguard against demagoguery. Demagoguery is the process whereby skilful speakers/writers influence public opinion by "employing the traditional tools of rhetoric with complete indifference to truth" (Roberts-Miller, 2005, p. 460).

2.3 Public Sphere

In 1962, the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas contributed the term "public sphere" to public opinion studies (Papacharissi, 2002). "The public sphere is a space where people exchange ideas and challenge one another's opinion" (Howard, 2005, p. 154). The adjective "public" in this definition indicates that being public is not a phenomenon in itself, but a shared social phenomenon (Perrin & McFarland, 2011). Habermas traced the development of the public sphere from the seventeenth century and its fall in the twentieth century (Papacharissi, 2002), asserting that a new political class in Britain came to the fore in the eighteenth century

and formed a public body that provided resonant public opinion. The new class, called the bourgeoisie, was opposed to the old rigid authorities such as Church and State. The bourgeoisie built new institutions, and consequently, more newspapers and tabloids were launched, which enabled private opinion to become public. Public spaces like universities and libraries were domains for public debates (Papacharissi, 2002), and they were open to all (Iosifidis, 2011). It is ironic that this culmination of democracy was undemocratic by not including women and people from lower social classes, which was acknowledged by Habermas himself (as cited in Papacharissi, 2002).

According to Papacharissi (2010), the public sphere facilitates diverse discussions of public interest. In other words, it reproduces democratic traditions that enable citizens to interact within representative political systems; directly injecting a healthy dose of immediate communication and debate. The exchanged information is assumed to derive from public opinion, so it functions as a laboratory in which citizens' opinions are developed and expressed (Perrin & McFarland, 2011).

Furthermore, to act in that capacity, the public sphere should meet certain conditions. It needs, for example, a shared published and accessible text (Howard, 2005). This "text" does not refer to the written or printed words only, but includes multiple forms of content that are consumed today (spoken, written, or multimedia). Secondly, an act of conversation is necessary as it becomes the channel in which citizens build a public sphere whereby they discuss their affairs without discrimination. Finally, the public sphere requires a place of administration for making and enacting decisions (Howard, 2005).

However, Fraser (1990) argues that the public sphere never existed. Frasers' argument was based on several assumptions including the belief that the public sphere requires elimination of social inequality (1990). In a similar vein, Schudson (1997) believes that there is little evidence that an ideal public sphere was ever of existence. He argues that public discourse is not the soul of democracy because it is seldom egalitarian and offers no solution to problems of democracy. Currently, the public sphere includes women and people from all classes, but it is left with systems where the public does not matter (Papacharissi, 2002). For example, capitalist privatizing forces have created a commercial culture that has replaced the public sphere which is affirmed by Carey (1995). Commercial programming and advertising revenues seem to have more influence on the media than the democratic ideals (Papacharissi, 2002).

2.4 Public Opinion of the Kony 2012 Campaign on Cable News Networks' Pages on Facebook

This thesis takes a stance that public opinion on cable news networks is over-mediated by social media, and that the individual is free from any constraints, so they can express their opinion without any fear. The traditional factors that affect public opinion like mass media, an individual's characteristics and relationships with others, formed part of this research. The data that this research studied are supposed to be generated in a highly informative environment in a virtual public sphere, but there are several issues related to the new public sphere. The targeted public of this campaign is global, yet the campaign is an American-based campaign designed to raise awareness of the human right abuses in Uganda against children. In order to understand the research objective, it is imperative to provide a clearer understanding of the elements that constitute the title of this research project before selecting suitable theories and models.

2.4.1 The Kony 2012 campaign.

This thesis investigates the public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign on cable news network pages on Facebook. On March 5th, 2012, a twenty nine minute documentary entitled *Kony 2012* was uploaded on to YouTube and other social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. The film was directed by Jason Russell, Co-founder of the Invisible Children (IC) charity organization (Wilkerson, 2012). The video, which was described as a social media phenomenon, was watched by more than 50 million people around the world in three days (Kron & Goodman, 2012). The aim of the documentary was to make the world aware of Joseph Kony and his group's atrocities against humanity and his child soldiers. The makers of video hoped to incite public opinion to get the USA involved in the Ugandan situation.

Children formed 80% of Joseph Kony's Lord Resistance Army (LRA) (McDonald, 2012). These children are kidnapped and driven away from their homes deep into the Ugandan forests in the North where they cross the Nile into the Congo. Boys are usually forced to kill their parents, and girls are abducted to become sex slaves. The LRA was also notorious for mutilating its victims. This issue was ignored by the international community for nearly 26 years (MacDonald, 2012). Before March 2012, the movie "Machine Gun Preacher" brought attention to the horrifying problems of

child soldiers in Africa and to the required efforts to rescue those children (Prendergast & Benner, 2011).

On 8th March, 2012, Scott Pelley (2012) from CBS evening News commented, “In less than a week it’s become the most viral video ever”. Two days later, Steven L. Warren (2012), CBN News Internet Producer, described this action to return justice to Uganda as “taking off like wildfire” across social media platforms. Looking at the role of elites, Jay Carney, the White House Press Secretary, declared in a press conference that he had not seen the video but was aware of it and confirmed that the US government had already sent troops in October 2011 to the north of Uganda (CNN, 2012). Carney believed that the viral video was a part of a response to human crisis to raise awareness of the horrific activities of the LRA (CNN, 2012). This video received more tweets than that of those concerning the launch of the iPad (Williams, 2012). Diane Sawyer (2012) from the ABC World News states, “It is possible that [the] most powerful army today is not [the] military, but a collection of celebrities, students and ordinary people trying to transform human rights around the globe”. Many celebrities such as Oprah, Justin Bieber and Ryan Reynolds tweeted about the Joseph Kony issue (Sawyer, 2012).

The Kony 2012 campaign “idealizes the ethos of social media activism” as described by Albright (2012), PhD researcher at the University of Auckland. The Kony 2012 video proved the power of social networking sites as campaigning tools (Williams, 2012). It was shown in full on “Ten”, on the Australian TV network (Williams, 2012), but not everyone was supportive. The screening of the Kony 2012 video met with anger in Uganda after the film was shown in Lira town Park on a screen fashioned from a white sheet held up by metal poles (Smith, 2012). The anger boiled over into stone-throwing, which made the organizers flee for cover. The Ugandans believed that the film had given Kony unwarranted celebrity status, and for them the Kony crimes are no longer an issue to defend (Smith, 2012).

The IC organization was also criticised for its financial practices, and how donations were spent. The IC was accused of not channelling the donated money to Uganda and that about two thirds of the money was spent on the campaign. The campaign was described as mere propaganda (Pelley, 2012). These criticisms were covered by other news networks including ABC News (see 4.2.1.2), Al-Jazeera English (see 4.2.3.1) and CNN International (see 4.2.2.2).

The following diagram (Figure 1) summarises the significant events that are related to this research project.



Figure 1. The 10-day timeline of key events in the Kony 2012 campaign.

2.4.2 Public opinion and the USA foreign policy.

Abraham Lincoln's quotation in the introduction (see 2.1) is a good illustration of the significance of public opinion in political decisions of the USA. The Kony 2012 campaign, as mentioned earlier, calls for military intervention in Uganda to capture Kony. The foreign policy issues have been at the centre of the American public opinion for several years (Baum, 2003; Entman, 2004). For instance, after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, members of Congress from both parties (Democratic and Republican) and Bush administration members expressed their concerns about the unbiased media coverage, which turned public opinion against war (Baum & Potter, 2008). This complaint showed the extent of the influence that news coverage can have on public opinion. Two assumptions can be made from this: first, mass media can fail in delivering the messages that politicians or government think they should convey; and second, the news media shapes public opinion regarding foreign policy (Baum & Potter, 2008). Public attention to foreign policy news is generally low, or it varies among individuals. Some individuals actively seek political information because they are politically interested, but others may obtain this information without much effort (Papacharissi, 2002). In political science, the traditional view of media which builds channels for messages of elites is based on a simplified assumption that media in the policy making process primarily serves as a linkage mechanism, rather than as an independent actor (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). One could conclude that news framing may affect public opinion and policy making.

2.4.3 Cable news networks on Facebook.

For the purpose of this research, it is useful to explore the public sphere where public opinion under investigation was formed: namely, cable news networks' pages on Facebook. Facebook is one of the social media platforms that has received great attention by researchers of communication studies (Cabrera Paz, 2009). Facebook was created by Mark Zuckerberg (Ator, 2009) with an estimated 1.01 billion users by September 2012 (The Associated Press, 2013). Facebook provides people with "the power to share and make the world more open and connected" ("Facebook", 2012). Facebook has changed how people interact with the media, how marketers promote and sell products, the way governments target citizens, and how corporate organizations operate (Anderson, 2011). It has evolved into a revolutionary medium with an extraordinary amount of potential to affect the characteristics of socio-political activities (Anderson, 2011).

Facebook as a social networking site is conducive to enhancing participation; just as the press, postal service, telephone and telegraph did before. For instance, the printing press was used by Luther to protest against the Catholic Church, and the American Revolution was fostered using the postal service that Franklin designed (Shirky, 2011). Today, activists are using all available and possible means to deliver their views and coordinate their movements including the social networking sites (SNS). SNS in general can be defined as a web-based service that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a defined system (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). This system "articulate[s] a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). Cabrera Paz (2009) pointed out that people construct their identities through networks of connections that knit them with others; and social networking sites which invite users to identify themselves, their relational world, and biography of their relationships in their real life. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), the first social networking site, "SixDegrees.com", was launched in 1997. It promoted itself as a tool where people can connect and message their friends, but it did not survive. Therefore, Facebook as a SNS contributes to the sharing of information, knowledge, and opinion; but there are several issues that may prevent Facebook from being an ideal public sphere. First, there are no models of behaviour because the open participation on the internet allows unstructured and anarchic

conversation (Min, 2010). The second concern is related to the “Digital Divide”, which can be defined as unequal access to information and communication technologies, along the lines of social status, economics, gender, race, and geography. The digital divide raises social questions because of unequal access to the Internet that may cause disadvantages for the already marginalized groups in society (Papacharissi, 2002). Politically, it concerns citizens’ differential usage of the technology for political purposes, which can be called a “Democratic Divide” (Min, 2010). Furthermore, Facebook has become an arena for corporate activities, which consequently are redeveloping to become “a retail real estate” (Murdock, 2004, p. 14). Moreover, it is important to take into account that the Internet is a distribution medium rather than an original news content source (Iosifidis, 2011), which is recognized by Shirky (2011) as an instrumental view of the social media as discussed earlier (see 1.2). Shirky (2011) considered this view to be politically appealing because of the reasons listed in the following quote:

It overestimates the value of access to information, particularly information hosted in the West, while underestimating the value of tools for local coordination (Shirky, 2011, p. 28).

This thesis takes the stance those participants’ responses on the cable news networks’ pages on Facebook are more controlled and organized (Gurevitch, Coleman & Blumler, 2009). According to Mullen (2010), Edward Said and Noam Chomsky argued that when traditional media occupied the Internet, they became dominant sources of news on cyberspace. What characterises the cable news networks on the Internet is having traditional audiences and resources which give them considerable advantages over alternative new media rivals like citizen journalism. Currently, audiences have more choices than ever about what to watch, the time at which they watch it, and how to receive it (Gurevitch et al., 2009). Furthermore, online and interactive characteristics in contemporary broadcasting are believed to offer novel opportunities to provide a range of voices and perspectives (Macdonald, 2007). New media producers are not expected to work within a professional and exclusive enclave because social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter receive thousands of comments from the public (Macdonald, 2007). The audiences’ desire to make their voice heard can be challenging to state policy and agenda setting. However, the contribution cannot

always be channels of resistance created deliberately by opposition or political activists as argued by Attor (2004).

Media's audiences have affected the production of political stories in a way that was not possible twenty years ago (Gurevitch et al., 2009). Velasquez (2012) believes that certain features of social media shape how individuals behave. The barriers for political discussions such as censorship and fear of government have been lowered through the use of social media (Velasquez, 2012). SNSs, unlike traditional media, enable citizens to produce and consume political content (Howard, 2005). Gurevitch et al. (2009) argue that when individuals have accessible communication platforms that create alternative networks of information dissemination, then the gate-keeping function by journalists and other communicators will consequently wane, which means there is less control on Facebook. However, Papacharissi (2002) questions if the cyberspace offers an alternative to extend, widen or ignore the public sphere; whether it will revolutionize the political sphere or will be adapted to the current status quo (Papacharissi, 2002).

However, Patterson (2008) argues that SNSs applications organise public debate rather than keeping citizens abreast of public affairs, so they are "ideal spaces for initiating public debate and social change" (Iosifidis, 2011, p. 622). This is reinforced by the notion of a strong participatory culture which is expected to be produced as a contrast to passive mass media consumption; meaning that the audiences are becoming increasingly active participants in political communication (Mutz & Young, 2011; Gurevitch et al., 2009; Romero, Galuba, Asur & Huberman, 2011). Conversely, fast and convenient access to more information does not mean that citizens are more informed and more willing to participate in political discussions. Papacharissi (2002) believes that greater participation helps in political discussions, but it does not ensure a healthier public sphere. Ferguson (2000) explains that these aspects of SNSs threaten the authorities in the beginning of their invention, especially with the free flowing of information, immediacy, interactivity features and availability at any time. The immediate coverage of events on the Internet makes the information sharable, expandable, and portable. Ferguson (2002) affirms that due to government's fear of interpretative power of new media, new media rush to set the agenda and package opinion on the topic of interest quickly. Thus, news is framed in a way in which certain issues are emphasised more than others, which can be understood as "framing". The

framed news might not be received by the public directly as it can be exchanged among other networks as shown in media framing theories like in the Cascading Activation model of Entman (2004).

2.4.4 Cascading Activation Model.

Entman's Cascading Activation Model (2004, p. 10) shows how a cascading series of influencing variables link with each other and how the thoughts that support a certain frame extends down from the White House administration, via the rest of the different systems: the elite, media, produced media content, and public (Figure 2). The model shows that the first public expression comes from the US administration. The Cascading Activation Model is a US-based model, and it cannot be universally applicable. It is important to emphasize that not everything related to this model will be discussed in depth.

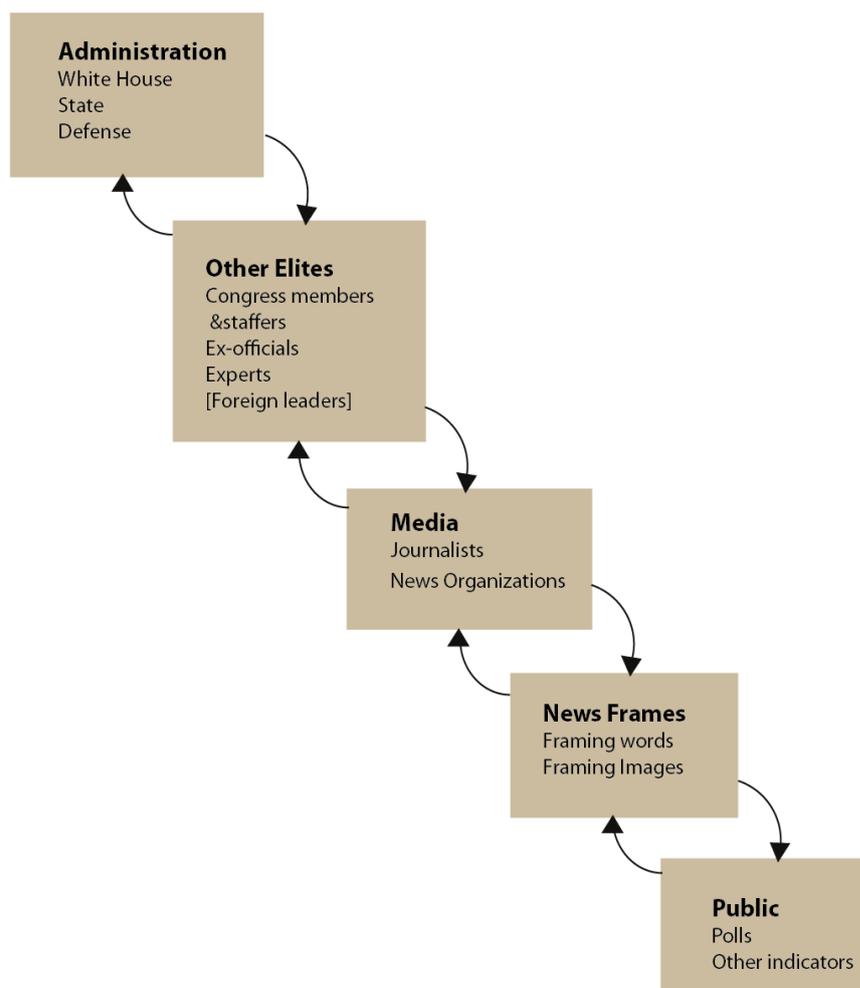


Figure 2. Cascading Activation networks.

The model suggests that media should provide sufficient information, so that the audiences can construct their counter frames of issues. Entman (2004) discusses that the counter frames should be constructed from words and images that resonate culturally, and should gain enough understanding as a major alternative to interpretation of the administration. The significance of this model is represented in its ability to reveal what kind of counter frames the media supply: why, when, and with what effects on foreign policy. Several studies have examined the framing effects without considering what happens when simultaneously opposing frames are encountered (Cobb, 2005). The latter asserts that when respondents are exposed to frames on both sides of an issue, the framing effect detected in the condition of one-sided framing often disappears (2005).

Apart from how the issues are framed, it is imperative to look at how people perceive the framed news. Papacharissi (2002) discusses how people from different cultural backgrounds and countries involve themselves in online political discussions, in minutes, often by expanding their perspectives with the diverse viewpoints available online. New technologies have managed to create a new sphere for political discussion; however, some may argue that they have impoverished the public sphere culture. The diverse cultural backgrounds “make it difficult to recreate a unified public sphere, on or offline” (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 22). Due to the difficulty of obtaining a unified public sphere, one may focus on the social environment that individuals belong to. The function and the influence of the social environment were highlighted decades ago in theories like the Spiral of Silence of Noelle-Neumann, Threshold model and other models which will be discussed in the following section.

2.5 The Expression of Opinion

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann’s Spiral of Silence theory, which was formulated in 1974, represents “the first integrated model of opinion formation in the behavioural tradition of public opinion research” (Splichal, 1999, p. 170). Scheufele and Moy (2000) assert that Spiral of Silence was viewed as a public opinion theory that has attributes of depth, range, and accuracy. Noelle-Neumann (1974) confirms that public opinion formed as a result of individuals’ interaction with their environments. An individual’s willingness to express their opinions depends on how they perceive public opinion, which means that they are constantly assessing the opinion climate. For Noelle-

Neumann (1974), an individuals' attitudes and behaviours are likely to be influenced by their perception of others' acts and opinions. Noelle-Neumann (1995) argues that individuals scan their environment continuously for existing and future public opinion distribution, in order to categorise and distinguish between opinions that will gain the approval of society from those that might lead to their social isolation. The plights of individuals who believe that they are in the minority give the Spiral of Silence its name (Taylor, 1982) (see 2.5).

Noelle-Neumann (1974) argues that the fear of isolation for individuals is more important than their own judgments as it makes them willing to heed the opinion of others, which might come at the expense of suppressing their own opinions. The individual is vulnerable as the majority can "punish him [sic] for failing to toe the line" (Noelle-Neumann, 1974, p. 43). The concepts of public opinion, punishment, and sanctions are linked tightly together. The results of these concepts affect how individuals behave in public, so they can be either more confident or silent. Lastly, in this theory, mass media function as a constant portrayal of trends in the opinion climate, which significantly affects opinion formation. Noelle-Neumann (1974) viewed media as constant because the values shared by journalists limit the selective perception possibility of media. However, the selected perception provided by the media can be challenged by the interactivity and the co-creation of content facilitated by new media applications such as social networking sites (Walther et al., 2010). Individuals using social media can express their opinions freely of the different messages that the media transmit.

Splichal (1999) equates public opinion and the fear of isolation suggested by Noelle-Neumann (1974) to the idea of Foucault's idea of Panopticon. The idea of Panopticon was first formulated in 1786 by Bentham (as cited in Splichal, 1999) who depicted the Panopticon as a prison where criminals were kept securely in order to root out their criminal habits, then set to work (as cited in Brunon-Ernst, 2012). The main feature of this Panopticon is a circular building with an inspector in the centre who oversaw the activities of prisoners in their cells (Brunon-Ernst, 2012).

There are several reasons that incited Splichal (1999) to criticize the theorization of public opinion as Panopticon. First of all, the Panopticon clearly does not represent the process of public opinion, but the process of an individual's formation and expression of opinion under external control. Moreover, the Spiral of

Silence excessively hypothesises on the fear of isolation as an influential motive in individuals' public behaviour. Moreover, this theory ignores other affiliated motives that are part of the individual motivational structure. Even if other motives were included in Noelle-Neumann's behavioural theory, the Spiral of Silence, "it would still fail to explain public opinion because motives alone cannot fully explain behaviour or... a particular type of behaviour" (Splichal, 1999, p. 176).

Individuals do not only attend to their social environment when they perceive public opinion, but also through the influence of behaviours and attitudes (Scheufele & Moy, 2000). Regardless of the theory's drawbacks, one can conclude that the relationships among members of a group can have an impact on individuals' opinions, which tend to follow that of the perceived majority.

Scheufele and Moy (2000) discuss that there are variables that should be considered, in order to fully grasp the Spiral of Silence; such as the moral component of public opinion, and timing and function of the media. Firstly, this Spiral of Silence can only be applied to the issues with a moral component or normative elements, where opinion can lead the individual to become publically isolated. Moreover, the time factor implies that the climate of opinion and its future development is a critical factor in this theory, as individuals might look for opinions that they believe are, or will be, dominant in the future. This perception, whether accurate or not, would influence individuals' willingness to speak out. Finally, it has been argued that the process of the Spiral of Silence can only take place if the media take an identifiable position in the conflict (Donsbach, 1987); however one of the early studies conducted by Lasorsa (1991), which was tested against the Spiral of Silence, has criticised the perception of the mass media role as variable, rather than being constant.

The perception of the majority's opinion can also be seen in the "Pluralistic Ignorance" studied by Taylor (1982). This theory is related to the accuracy of the environmental perception by the individuals. It posits that in a certain situation, the majority of group members will inaccurately believe that the others conform to a certain idea and opinion, and they will uphold those, while rejecting that opinion. It indicates a mistaken belief behind an individual opinion, which is likely to stand in the way of changes. It somehow represents the fear of others to voice their opinions, so they support a certain opinion because they assume that others support it. In term of

this study, it is assumed that their frames that may lead individuals to an inaccurate judgment or opinion in some situations.

In various decision-making scenarios, individuals would be more influenced by their interactions with each other than by media, as discussed by Watts and Dodds (2007). Lazarsfeld argued that a small minority of “opinion leader[s]” within a specific social context act as intermediaries between media and public (as cited in Watts & Dodds, 2007). The opinion leaders are persons who are likely to influence others in a specific environment. The opinion leaders’ influence is direct and derives from their status as individuals who are highly respected, informed, or simply connected (Watts & Dodds, 2007).

Earlier research of media influence posits direct flow of information from media to audiences, but the “Intermedia theory” or two flows of communication of Katz and Lazarsfeld proposed in 1955 suggested that information flows from media to opinion leaders and from them to the people who constitute the social networks, or what can be called 'primary groups' (as cited in Hirokawa & Lowe, 2002). The primary groups can be defined as a system of interpersonal relationships among family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers, and are characterised by regular communication. Those interacting individuals seem to collectively generate and maintain common ideas and beliefs, which in turn become modified (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). The primary groups can be seen in social media as taking different forms. Individuals flock to different social networks to socialise with their friends and families, share information of interest, and to be seen through restructured networks facilitated by technology (Boyd, 2010). These social networks can help people go beyond their friends and family networks, and mix with individuals from different networks for social, cultural, and political purposes (Boyd, 2010).

The functions of the primary groups can be seen as different forms, a notion put forward by Hirokawa and Lowe (2002) and based on the paper “Katz and Lazarsfeld revisited: Using Inter-media theory to enhance health campaigns” presented at the *In Global Health Conference*. First, individuals hold an advantage in sharing the same attitudes, opinion, and beliefs of the people with whom they wish to be identified (primary groups). Second, primary groups work as a reference for individuals to validate their interpretation and evaluation of media messages. Even in Intermedia theory, the media message has greater influence when the argument is supported by

an individual's social network. Third, these groups usually provide instruction for individuals on how to act. Media messages can imply what people should do, but seldom show them how to do it. Finally, primary groups provide individuals with normative guidelines. Media messages provide information that is designed to influence beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour but rarely provide information about social norms. In other words, primary groups serve as a channel for mass communication transmission.

Primary groups can be represented in the online feedback where individuals subscribe to their peers' messages. But, in brief, the primary groups cannot be applied in its fullest term in this research as the social networks are wide and with relatively complicated components. This limitation was emphasised in Krassa's Threshold model (1988) and was also a critique of the Spiral of Silence.

2.6 Threshold Model

Krassa (1988) adapts the Spiral of Silence theory by including social groups and putting forward the idea that the reference group can affect the perception of what is seen as the dominant opinion. Individuals value opinions of some people more than others, so the influence of a dominant opinion should be based on how that opinion is valuable. In this regard, Krassa introduced the Threshold model in his opinion assertion model. He believed that people cannot see the same things because they belong to different networks and have a different frame of reference. Thus, different individuals evaluate the environment in different ways. Scheufele (1999) discusses that mass media sets the frame of reference that audiences can use to interpret and discuss events. Krassa (1988) argues that the major problem of the Spiral of Silence is embedded in the information which travels via networks and is context dependent. Noelle-Neumann emphasized that social groups and selective perception are important to the idea that people are not globally concerned or aware. Individuals give more importance to the activities of certain social groups and are more aware of the activities and preference of certain groups than others (Krassa, 1988). Therefore, the character of these groups must be considered to assess that required social support before an individual will express his/her view. In other words, the actual proportion of those voicing particular views does not matter if their existence or positions are unknown to an individual (Krassa, 1988). Individuals will not overcome their fear of isolation, despite being

among 10,000 of the same opinion, if they are ignorant to the existence of the group. With specific regard to public opinion on Facebook, individuals may be ignorant to other opinions on cable news networks' pages, so expressing their own opinion may not matter.

Furthermore, Noel-Neumann (1974) asserted that individuals consider the opinion of the majority before they voice their opinion. In other words, a person values the action of some people more than others' (Krassa, 1988). The threshold model assumes that individuals will switch from A to B only when the majority adopts B "in order for the perceived benefit of adopting a new innovation to outweigh the perceived cost" (Watts & Dodds, 2007, p. 443). This model attempts to explain the link between an individual's threshold and the entire level of responses by considering both individual preferences and relationships among participants in a defined collective behaviour (Glynn & Park, 1997).

The most interesting point to look at regarding this research is the distinction that is made by Krassa's model between the climate of the opinion (the perception of a social situation) and individuals' thresholds for the expression of their opinion, which is a combination of individual and situational characteristics (Glynn & Park, 1997). Hence, opinion formation is an interaction of the perceived preference of the opinion climate and individuals' threshold for expression. Glynn and Park summarised the connection between the former two theories: "Threshold for expression is a function of the relationship of fear of isolation from the group and the intensity of the opinion held" (1997, p. 217).

2.7 Media impact on public opinion: the CNN effect and media coverage

Apart from the influence of the social environment, the debate of whether the media has direct, indirect, or no effect on the audiences has grabbed the attention of media scholars as another variable effect on public opinion (Boyle, Schmierbach, Armstrong & Cho, 2006). In the Spiral of Silence theory, mass media are believed to have a substantial influence on the perception of opinion because the individuals depend on the media when public issues are at stake, as the public did not witness the related events first hand (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). However, Hirokawa and Lowe (2002) discussed that the selected perception provided by the media; that is, that most of the research on the effect of mass communication in the decade following World War II

focused on the persuasive mediated messages from the press, and later from radio; followed by TV broadcasting. These studies assumed the power of the media to control and shape citizens' ideas, attitudes, and behaviours, but this was not supported by research on media effects. For instance, Klapper (1960) argued that mass media does not serve as a sufficient cause of audience effects because media function among and through a link of mediating factors and the media effect on the public would be short-lived and minor. Conversely, Boyle et al. (2006) argue that media coverage has an impact on how the public perceives social and political issues. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) posit that the emerging research in media effect has indicated the shift in political communication research. Yet, mass media have strong, long term effects on the public, based on the ubiquitous and a constant stream of messages they transmit to audiences (Noelle-Neumann, 1973).

With specific regard to the studies of cable news networks' effects, it is imperative to look at the term "CNN effects". Baum and Potter (2008) assert that the recent technical change culminating in the 24 hours news coverage basically altered the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy: a phenomenon now referred to as the CNN effect. The impact of these new global, real-time media is regarded as substantial (Livingston, 1997). The real time quality distinguishes the CNN effect from earlier media effects on foreign policy in that they cover and broadcast events so quickly to the public that politicians lament their loss of being able to control media policy (Livingstone, 1997). From the early 1990s, CNN (as one of the cable news networks selected for this research) focused on "breaking live coverage of international crisis" (Robinson, 2011, p. 3). CNN proved to have a high visibility of real time television reporting of political events like the Gulf War in 1991 and Tiananmen Square (Robinson, 2011). Yet Baum and Potter (2008) explain that the term CNN effect emerged before 24 hours news networks such as FOX and MSNBC were launched. Several studies used the CNN effect to refer to a wide array of news outlets (Baum & Potter, 2008). Images of suffering may make citizens demand that leaders and policy makers should do something to solve problems and issues which will pressure politicians to act. The CNN effect can be seen as an important part of a long running debate regarding the relationship between news media and politics (Robinson, 2011).

It is important to rely on the knowledge of news media and its political concerns in order to provide a full explanation for the way it affects audiences, and the

opinion the media adopt in their news stories (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). But news content cannot be always an accurate indication of what the public is thinking or doing because the news might be a selective version of reality constrained by conventions that cause media to provide “misleading portrayals of public opinion” (Patterson, 2008, p. 34). In fact, according to Wettstein (2012), mass media manipulates public opinion rather than develops it.

Roessler (2008) points out that there are three concepts that should be distinguished in order to study the impact of media coverage on public opinion. Roessler (2008) defines agenda-setting as a mutual influence between media and audience perception of important issues in public life during a period of time, while “framing” can be understood as the patterns of interpretation that are common in media coverage and audience minds. It reveals some aspects of reality while ignoring the others. Finally, the concept “priming” can be defined as a suggestion by news content to audiences to use specific issues as standards for assessing certain performance (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

The “framing effect” is vexing in public opinion research (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Changes in presentation of an event or issue would cause changes in opinion. Chong and Druckman (2007) confirm that if opinions are manipulated by how the issue is framed, then there is no legitimate representation of the public opinion. Moreover, individuals cannot select the information for inclusion or the exclusion, or “emphasizing some elements over others”, without framing (Entman, 2004). Framing can be found in the structure of news report, sources and quotations, covered or omitted themes, and in single words that make up the news (Smith, 2007).

2.8 Media Framing: Definition, Bias, and Adoption

News framing is one of the factors that are believed to have an influence on public opinion formation. The psychological foundation of framing was laid by the experimental work of Kahneman and Tversky (1984). However, the sociological origin of framing traces back to the work of Goffman in the early 1970s, who assumed that people cannot understand the world entirely and struggle to interpret lived experiences and make sense of their worlds (as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Goffman explained that individuals should apply “primary frameworks” to categorize and interpret the information (as cited in Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Valkenburg,

Semetko and De Vreese (1999) suggested that framing influences audience recall and thus audiences' thoughts. As these frames can be used to entice audiences, which can result in a better recall of information, it is possible that they can diminish audience recall because they distract the audience from the facts (Valkenburg et al., 1999). Framing involves selecting some aspects of perceived reality and making them more prominent in the communication text so as to promote a particular problem definition, moral evaluation, interpretation, or solution recommendation for the item described (Hallahan, 1999; Entman, 2004; Boyle et al., 2006), and the media adopt these frames by biasing the cognitive processing of information (Hallahan, 1999). Many aspects fit under framing of news stories including "Plot lines and characters, colour and tone of the coverage, focus and parameters of media attention, place on the media agenda, depth and sophistication of coverage, and message carried by the media" (Ferguson, 2000, p. 12). D' Angelo and Kuypers (2010) discuss that the frame subtly induces us to purify our perception of the world in a particular way, but due to the selectivity of our attention, we do not notice this process.

Framing of issues related to social movements can be examined according to the following criteria: 1) flexibility and rigidity (the frames vary to which they are exclusive, inelastic, rigid, and restricted; or inclusive, elastic, open, and elaborated in term of the themes that they articulate and incorporate); 2) variation in interpretative scope and influence (the scope of frames associated with social movements is usually limited to a set of related problems or to interest of particular groups; however, some frames are very broad in term of the scope); and 3) degree of resonance (the concept of resonance is relevant to the impact of the issue of proffered framing, subsequently attending to the question of why some frames are quite effective or "resonate", while other frames do not) (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Another essential point that should be emphasised in this review is the substantive class of framing of political issues that function as "defining effects or conditions as problematic, identifying causes, conveying a moral judgment, and endorsing remedies or improvements" (Entman, 2004, p. 5).

Finally, generic frames that news is commonly framed with include: (a) the emphasizing of emotions (human interest frames) where is the focus on individuals; (b) the emphasizing of conflicts between individuals or parties (conflict frame); (c) crediting, or blaming particular individuals or political organizations (responsibility

frame); and finally, emphasizing the economic consequences for the audience (economic consequences frame). These frames are postulated by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) in addition to the “morality frame” which interprets an event or an issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions (De Vreese, 2005, p. 56).

It is important to define framing bias to understand cable news networks’ framing. Entman (2010) discusses the media bias related to framing: namely content bias and decision making bias; the most two relevant and conflated senses. Content bias can be understood as a systematically slanted framing of mediated communication that advocates the success of a specific interest, ideology, or party in competition in order to control state power (Entman, 2010). In this type of bias, one can observe patterns of slant that promote support from some interests that seek power and promote disapproval of the opponents. The other common use of the term “media bias” relates to decision making, which is the influence of the media belief system on the content they produce. Critics believe that reporters in media allow their personal attitudes and ideologies to guide news decisions, but reporters themselves deny such bias (Entman, 2010). Therefore, framing requires directing media perceptions and their constructions of those perceived real-world facts which are often subject to multiple interpretations (Entman, 2010).

Lastly, framing adoption focuses on the effect of media framing on the individual salience or frame’s accessibility, providing people with a context within which the issue can be evaluated or interpreted (Wettstein, 2012). Framing adoption means that audiences structure their thinking in ways compatible with the dominant frames of the news media. There are two factors that facilitate adoption of frames as discussed by Wettstein (2012). First, audiences are more likely to adopt frames when they are accessible to the issue, thus linking their agenda setting to framing. Second, it has been argued that accessibility is not sufficient for adopting a particular frame because the frame should be in accordance with individual’s preferences and beliefs, which reminds us of the Threshold model (see 2.6). The media content that an individual is exposed to usually makes frames containing “conflicting interpretations of an issue equally accessible” (Wettstein, 2012, p. 320). Furthermore, Wettstein (2012) argues that ideology and socioeconomic status might have more influence on the frame adoption than exposure to framed media content. In the present research, the researcher expected that different frames would be adopted by news networks in

reporting Kony 2012 campaign news. All of the selected news networks provide real instant reporting and they were always looking for the frames that interested their audiences, but the presence of bias is inevitable. Zhai and Shah (2005) argue that even though people in the news industry claim that their reporting is objective, the actual attitude might be biased. These attitudes can be different from one network to another due to the differences in networks' backgrounds and agenda settings.

2.9 Co-orientational Measurement Approach

The Co-orientational Measurement approach gives us another direction for understanding relationships between different groups aimed at having an agreement on the perception of an issue. For more than a half century it has provided a (useful) diagnostic framework to understand how two different agents orient themselves to each other and to gain mutual object of judgement. It has proved to be applicable to numerous relationships; that is, individuals, groups and organizations. Public opinion surveys are usually used to measure how the public's perception of an issue has been changed. Glen M. Broom (1978) introduces the Co-orientational Measurement approach to examine the indicators of effectiveness of public relations. The indicators include understanding, accuracy, congruency, and traditional objective of agreement (Broom, 1978). This thesis does not apply this approach to identify the public relations problem between the IC organization and the public, or to plan PR programmes, but it is used to explain why people change their attitudes as a result of their relationships with others within their social networks (Avery, Lariscy & Sweetser, 2010).

Broom (1978) argues that there are two approaches to define an issue in the first place. In corporate-public definitions of issue, a problem exists if there is a contradiction between the corporate perspective of an issue and the views held by targeted public members. Eliminating this discrepancy becomes the motivation for persuasive messages which are directed at the public. This approach implicitly has the assumption that "a public's opinions and behaviour are determined in part by its perception of an issue" (Broom, 1978, p. 111).

In contrast, in the organization-public definitional-agreement, an additional assumption is made indicating that if organization's and public definitions of the issue are constant, public opinion and behaviour will become more symmetrical to the organization's needs and the views of what the public is interested in (Broom, 1978).

This view evaluates the relationships within a specific social system composed of organizations and their public, so their survey is to find out how similar the public’s definition of the issue to that of the organization. In this present research, cable news networks represent what is called “organization”, and their interactions on Facebook can be seen as a form of survey. Instead of measuring the apparent agreement on the issue’s definition, the task is advanced to the level of measuring the relationships between the organizations and its public on a consensual framework.

Avery et al. (2010) argue that the Co-orientational Measurement approach is not a theory, but is a model for describing the relations in larger social systems, although it has no power regarding these relationships. In other words, this model diagnoses the problems in the organization-public relationships, rather than providing a simple definitional agreement of the approach (Broom, 1978). One of the social systems that Avery et al. (2010) applied is social media and their users. Avery et al. (2010) maintain that social media outlets not only transmit the messages in real time, but also communicate via social media which can be a strategic movement designed to reach particular audiences. From a strategic communication perspective, social media creates an avenue through which to deploy messages effectively (Avery et al., 2010). The following model (Figure 3) illustrates the relationships according to the Co-orientational Measurement model (adopted from Broom, 1978, p. 11).

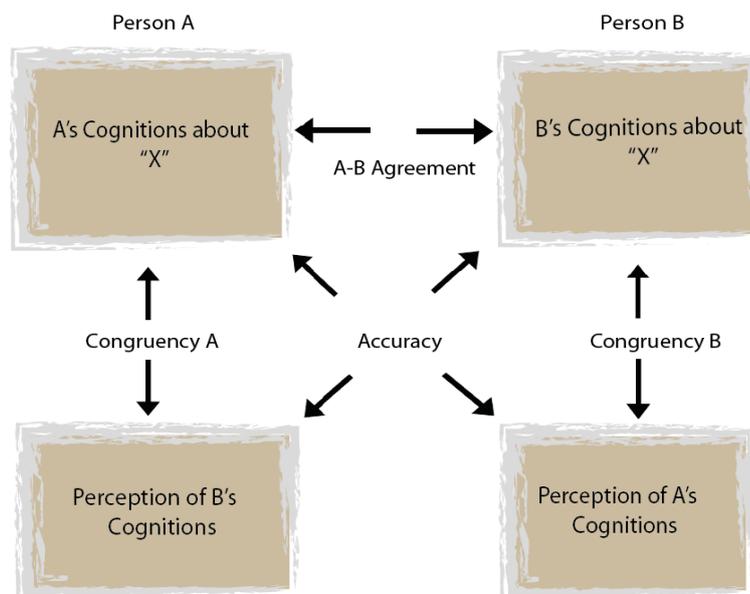


Figure 3. Co-orientational Measurement approach model.

The first box on the left side represents how Person “A” views the issue “X”, and the second box shows how Person “A” estimates the person B’s perceptions of the same

issue “X”. Waters (2009) argues that the agreement is considered to be the extent to which the organization and the public hold similar views about the issue, and it is represented by the vertical arrow connecting Person “A” and Person “B”.

The perceived agreement, “Congruency” in Figure 3, is defined as the extent to which one side perceives the agreement or disagreement with the other side on the issue. Accuracy is achieved when one side’s estimation of the other side’s view is consistent with the actual views of the other side (Waters, 2009). But this estimation can be mistaken as in the Pluralist Ignorance of Taylor (1982) (see 2.5) who posits that the majority of people would inaccurately perceive that others hold a certain opinion and they will uphold that, and ignore their own opinions. In other words, the majority of the group will support that opinion because they assume that others have the same opinion.

2.10 Understanding Text and What it Means for the Present Research

In summary, public opinion on cable news networks’ pages on Facebook might be different from public opinion offline. There are two reasons for focusing on subjective media tone represented in news framing. As mentioned previously, an objective media tone cannot be determined all the time because what journalists gather is what they present. Nowadays, individuals have more choices than before regarding knowledge acquirement. Individuals selectively search for information that fits their needs and interests, as discussed by Krassa (1988). The dependence of individuals on news media to build their own perception and consequently their own opinions, as pointed out by Noelle-Neumann (1993), might not be relevant to public opinion formation on Facebook as news items are produced by an unlimited number of news outlets, and it is difficult for individuals to be attendant to all news outlets; especially on the internet. On the other hand, social networks (human social environment), or the primary group of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) might be in a different form and with various degrees of influence. Individuals are used to discussing media content with members of their social networks and depend on their primary group to guide them in opinion formation. However, on news networks’ pages on Facebook, social ties with other users can be weaker than the social ties in the real life. Individuals selectively choose the media content and the social groups that they want to identify themselves with. For instance, people can follow the people they want to identify with on twitter or click

“like” to certain comments on Facebook. In this research most liked comments were studied in order to find out why people click “like” as part of public opinion. However, there are no studies reviewing this new way of opinion expression. The researcher looked at it as part of individuals’ social environment. The comments that received a greater number of “likes” influenced others who also gave these “likes”.

Moreover, on the internet, individuals are able to check the accuracy of information provided by the news media by using search engines which have networked how information is accessed (Boyd, 2010). However, adopting the opinion of the majority, which is the core of the Spiral of Silence theory, might be impossible due to the difficulty of determining which group represents the majority of the global public today. However, the classic theories reviewed in this chapter gave importance to the environment of an issue which includes social relationships, level of responses, and individual thresholds beside the influence of subjective media tone which appears to be an integral part of interpreting public opinion. The socially shared meanings, interpersonal relationships norms, and conflict solutions vary across ethnic cultures. Scheufele and Moy (2000) question, “To what degree can culture-specific variables offset or increase the importance of opinion perceptions as predictors of individual behaviour or attitudes?”(p. 4).

One could conclude that the use of social networks for political discussion may open new channels for opinions by offering perspectives that are not covered by mainstream media. However, new inequalities resulting from new applications might affect the development of public opinion which must be kept in mind during analysis of public opinion. With such a complicated setting, it is hard to find out if media have more impact on public opinion than social environments or vice versa because drawing samples that represents the population of media content is hard with the huge amount of media outlets that global audiences are exposed to. The researcher selected the sample that might give insight into public opinion of the campaign, so she applied the appropriate methodological approach to achieve the purposes of the present research.

2.11 Summary

Efforts have been made to incorporate new models such as the Cascading Activation model and classical models like the Spiral of Silences, Pluralist Ignorance, and

Threshold theory to study how public opinion is formed. This chapter has reviewed the existing literature surrounding the factors that influence public opinion formation in general. This research revolved around two central themes: influence of media on public, and the influence of the public and their social environments (networks) on media perception and public opinion. Presenting the existing literature is an essential stage to start analysing new media platforms in order to see how the media and public interact to create public opinion.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter two, public opinion on cable news networks' pages on Facebook were studied in relation to other factors, in order to examine their influence on public opinion expression and formation. The text that represents public opinion toward the Kony 2012 campaign is large; therefore, it was broken down into more manageable units and then reconstituted in order to be analysed as a whole. Since a theoretical approach was employed, it is necessary to provide in-depth presentation of the research paradigm and research method that was used here, in addition to demonstrating the design that was most appropriate to achieving the research goals. The chapter will be concluded by presenting the practical approach that was used to conduct this research.

3.2 Research Objectives

The research design that is proposed in this chapter aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do news networks on Facebook affect the formation of public opinion?
2. How do the public's characteristics and their social networks (social environment) affect perception of news and consequently formation of public opinion?
3. What motivates Facebook users to click "like" on certain comments as a way of public opinion expression?

All studies in public opinion include quantitative data, but few studies have been conducted to study public opinion qualitatively (Burstein, 1998). It has been argued that the function of public opinion research is limited due to the on-going, changing, and difficult nature of capturing the communication process (Chong & Druckman, 2010). Cable news networks' influence was analysed with a focus on framing. As a reminder, the framing effect occurs when the process of communication alters public attitudes toward an object or event by changing the relative weights given to competing consideration about the object (Chong & Druckman, 2010). In this thesis, the framing effect was measured by analysing the attitudes reflected or embedded in

participants'¹ comments. Participants on news networks' pages on Facebook may retrieve their own experiences, physiological predispositions, social interactions, and ideologies to construct meanings that may affect their attitudes toward objects around them; commonly referred to as the "frame of reference" in communication studies.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) discuss that most of the studies on public opinion focused on the outcomes of the process of public opinion itself (e.g., attitudes for or against particular objects) or how attitudes are changing over time; however, this thesis project investigated both of them. Moreover, the socio-cognitive effects that involve social construction of meaning were studied to answer the second question where the emphasis was on the prominent cases. Lastly, it is necessary to avoid making casual assumptions. Changing news framing does not necessarily cause change in public opinion. News networks in this research project are working from different platforms (Facebook) and interacting with a different system (the public). "Media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists and other cultural entrepreneurs develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 2).

With particular reference to the Kony 2012 campaign, unequal relationships between elements and factors that affect public opinion (e.g. administration, elite, media, and public) were expected. In order to identify relationships between them, understand how they affect each other, and lastly criticise any violation in term of these relationships, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used. Critical discourse analysis was selected to be a framework for this research project for several reasons that will be discussed in the following section.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis as a Paradigm

In the initial stage of research design, the research sought to obtain a paradigm that was consistent with the insights gained from scanning the online posts on news networks' pages on face book. A paradigm can be defined as the orientation of research towards a particular focus and it "represents a set of basic beliefs or a world view that precedes any questions of empirical investigation" (Hancock, 2007, p. 64). In this thesis project, CDA was used due to the complexity of the context as cross-cultural

¹"Participants" will be used to refer to the audience who comments on news networks' posts.

socio-cognitive meanings are involved. CDA is one of four different approaches to discourse analysis that includes Sociolinguistic Analysis, Interpretative Structuralism, and Critical linguistic Analysis (Philips & Hardy, 2002). The discourse itself can be understood as “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)” (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 1). Phillips & Hardy (2002) affirm that understanding discourse is required to understand social reality, social interactions, experiences and ourselves. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) consider CDA to be the most influential branch of discourse analysis. It can be traced back to 1980s as a programmatic development in discourse studies led by Fairclough, Wodak, van Dijk, and others (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

Critical Discourse Analysis has made a significant contribution to critical social and political analysis (van Dijk, 1993). CDA can provide an account of the function of language, discourse, and a communicative event in reproduction of inequality and dominance (van Dijk, 1993). Moreover, CDA is used as a framework because it goes beyond a purely descriptive form of analysis, which cannot fully explain media effects on public (Gunter, 2000). Therefore, there is a need for a broad framework to meaningfully measure the impact of the media and understand the role of hegemony in media-public relationships.

Moreover, CDA can be understood as an “explanatory critique” that generates critical, social, or political research which contributes to the rectification of inequality (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). CDA understands itself as a politically critical approach committed to social change (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002). The linguistic forms of text can be systematically related to cultural and ideological functions. Luke (1997) argues that the text is the basic unit of analysis for CDA because it can be adopted as social expression; therefore, it was assumed that ideological and cultural roles of text should be taken into consideration during the conduct of this research project due to the complicated issues relating to public opinion, time limitation, and the different frame of references that individuals use.

The term “critique”, which is inherent in CDA, should be taken as a stance as having distance to the data (Wodak, 2001). The other critical aspect can be seen in the seeking of CDA to reveal the “discursive practices” function in the maintenance of social relations, including unequal relations of power (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002). This

approach aims to focus on the linguistic-discursive aspects of the process of change and social phenomena (Philips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Conversely, CDA is not limited to political, scientific, or a sociological account of dominance (van Dijk, 1993). Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000) argue that CDA would also contribute to several applied themes and social domains such as institutional discourse language, education, gender, literacy, advertising and promotional culture, media language, ideology, racism and economic discourse. The former four themes are most applicable to this research as we will later see.

This study adhered to the CDA approach. How the public perceives and views issues can develop over time from “from disconnected, poorly informed reactions to more thoughtful and considered conclusions, from changeable public opinion to settled public judgment” (Yankelovich, 2013). Understanding serious and complicated issues requires a multidisciplinary approach like CDA, in which distinctions between theory and application are less relevant; as was discussed by van Dijk (1993). Discussing dominance, inequality, and other attributes of relationships does not mean abandonment of the theoretical approaches because without sophisticated theories, grasping social issues might be impossible (van Dijk, 1993).

According to Blommaert (2005), since CDA is based on interpretation and context, shortcomings affecting the reliability of this research were expected. These shortcomings should be addressed to overcome any bias resulted from using CDA as a framework. Blommaert (2005) explains that the use of CDA as a research method is characterised by the vagueness of CDA as an analytical model, but in this research CDA was used as a framework. Furthermore, CDA in its actual analysis provides a biased interpretation of discourse under the mode of critical analysis: “CDA does not analyse how a text can be read in many ways, or under what social circumstances it is produced and consumed” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 31). Social circumstances in this research could have been represented as different places and times that the text is produced at, so the researcher may have missed the authors. In other words, the analyst’s point of view might be different from that of the participant. Moreover, the other concern regarding using the CDA model is the existence of pre-assumption, so the analyst should be aware of not analysing data according to their political biases. The last shortcoming is that language is never a neutral object because of its subjectivity to personal evaluation (Blommaert, 2005).

Finally, using CDA alone might not be sufficient because it includes both discursive and non-discursive forms of discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Discursive practice means “speaking and thinking on the basis of knowledge” while non-discursive practice implies “acting on the basis of knowledge” (Jäger, 2001, p. 33). The discursive practice was used in this research, and it will be explained in detail here in the three dimensional model for CDA.

3.4 Three Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

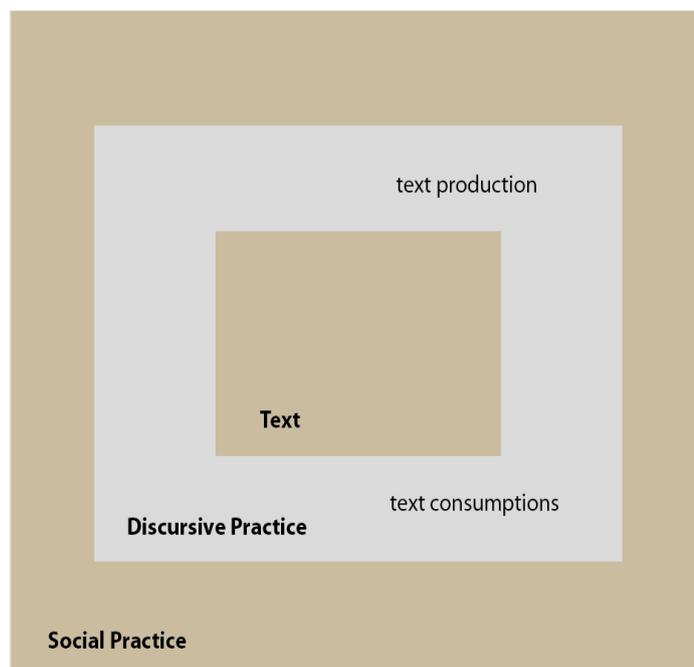


Figure 4. Fairclough's three dimensional model for CDA

According to Fairclough (2001, p. 1), “CDA is an analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse (including language, but also other forms of semiosis...) and other elements of social practices”. “Social practice” can be seen as well in Fairclough’s three dimensional model for CDA (see Figure 4) (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 68).

According to this model, every language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions (Fairclough, 2001; Jorgensen & Philips, 2002) that include the factors of namely: social practices, discursive practices, and text. Social practice is “practice to which the communicative event belongs “(Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 68). Every social practice is an articulation of diverse social elements including activities, object, subjects and social relations, time and place (context), discourse, values, instruments and forms of consciousness (Fairclough, 2001). The communicative event is the Kony 2012 campaign and the Facebook posts and comments surrounding

this campaign. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) explain that social practice and text relationship are mediated via discursive practices.

Discursive practice is a method related to how texts are produced and consumed (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). It is an important form of social practice that contributes to the social world constitutions including identities and relationships (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discursive practice analysis depends on how the producers of text draw on existing discourses and genres to create text as well as how the receivers of that text apply available discourse in the interpretation and phrasing of their responses. In this research, this analysis can be applied in the way in which cable news networks' frame posted news, and how audiences use the available genres to interpret perceived news. Fairclough (2001) defines "genres" as "diverse ways of acting, of producing social life, in the semiotic mode" (p. 2). These practices contribute to the production of unequal power relationships between groups (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Text simply is a product of discourse (Bloor & Bloor, 2007) which is represented in the news networks and audiences' comments regarding the Kony 2012 campaign. Text analysis concentrates on the features on which discourse is linguistically relies, such as vocabulary, grammar and sentence coherence. Discourse is embedded in the text with its various forms: spoken words, written texts, pictures, symbols and so on. (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Prior to analysing text, it is imperative to keep in mind that the text may constitute social realities; meaning the coders' beliefs or attitudes could be invoked during the coding process. This could affect the way coding takes place and produce bias (Gunter, 2000). For instance, if participants' comments to news networks posts are overwhelmed by anti-Americanism, the researcher should be aware of not having the same attitudes, or reading something that is not reflected by the produced text, so as to not affect the research discussion and findings.

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of how public opinion of the Kony campaign 2012 was formed, it is essential to realize that text is not meaningful by itself. To understand discourse embodied in text and its effects, the analyst should consider the context within the existing text (van Dijk, 1997). The context studied in this research project included elements that may help analysts to understand how and why the given text is produced by participants and cable news networks. The context

related elements that were relevant to this study are discussed in the following section.

3.5 Context

Van Dijk (1997) understands the “context” as background, conditions, settings and surroundings of the text, action, or discourse. The definition of context can be narrow or broad as it depends on how much information the researchers require to analyse texts (Fairclough, 2001). The context in this case included participants: audiences which comment on posts of cable news networks on Facebook. The participants themselves constitute the social environment in which the discourse related to public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign was developed. Van Dijk (1997) argues that having power, prestige or authority, or being a man or woman might be considered as “contextual”. These attributes would affect production and interpretation of text, selection of topics, or the use of pronouns or special verbs (van Dijk, 1997). The following key terms contribute to understanding the text that represents public opinion and news framing in response to the Kony 2012 campaign that is believed to occur in the cross-cultural context, namely: participants, ideology, language, knowledge and dominance.

Participants are the individuals who are engaged in a specific act of discourse, and they can be speakers, listeners, readers, or writers who have specific social roles (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Individuals are called on to play many roles in their own lives. The situational features are often relevant, such as age, gender, class, education, social position, profession and ethnicity while physical features like height, weight, and eye colour are not (van Dijk, 1997).

The participants in this research were audiences of cable news networks who produced text representing public opinion toward the campaign as mentioned earlier. After scanning participants’ comments, one could interpret that there were two major groups where the text appears to generate from Americans/Westerners and Ugandans/Africans. The participants’ attributes that were considered in this research were those disclosed in the text itself such as public characteristics, values, and ideologies, which assisted in explaining the adoption of certain opinions.

Ideology can be defined as “a set of beliefs or attitudes shared by members of a particular social group” (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 10). Similarly, it is “a matter of

representation” (Fairclough, 2006, p. 29) that aims at truth; even though it might contain untruths, or half- truths, or unfinished systems of beliefs and thoughts (Lassen, Strunck & Vestergaard, 2006). The analyst should be aware that the discourse used by participants might be ideologically based, but that does not mean that beliefs that stem from ideology are always consciously held by individuals (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Ideologies can be deeply ingrained in the individuals’ thoughts, and they can be employed to make asymmetrical power relations and certain textual portrayals of worlds seem natural (Luke, 1997).

With specific regard to this study, it was anticipated that cable news networks’ posts and participants’ comments may not voice their underlying ideologies explicitly, hence it was imperative to examine the position of participants and cable news networks toward the campaign, in relation to how news of the campaign is framed and how participants’ characteristics affect how they perceive news. This required using a qualitative approach as well as a quantitative approach.

Language, as the third key term in the context, is produced by someone to communicate with someone else with a certain purpose at a particular place and time (Blommaert, 2005). Language in the CDA is not powerful by itself as it gains strength from the powerful person who uses it (Wodak, 2001); reminding us of the significance of participants’ attributes such as ethnicity, social position, profession, and education. As discussed, CDA is interested in the relationship between language and power. Both CDA and critical linguistic analysis are usually used interchangeably (Wodak, 2001).

Since knowledge is relevant to participants, it is attributed to the definition of context (van Dijk, 1997). Implied meanings, presuppositions, and interpretations of diverse discourses in participants’ comments reflect the knowledge of the participants. Van Dijk (1997) asserts the socio-cognitive dimension of shared knowledge (mutual knowledge). Mutual knowledge that is assumed in a communicative act might never exist (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Shared knowledge that people have can be biased ideologically (van Dijk, 2004), such as in the case of language.

Within a specific epistemic society, there is a consensus about the fact that shared knowledge is true, and not a belief, opinion, or ideological fiction. Such knowledge is presupposed in the discourses and interactions of the members of a society and the other ideologically opposed groups (van Dijk, 2004), so in this study it was imperative to detect dominant pieces of information of particular groups, to see

how they are perceived by members of that group and how they affect their perception of news, and consequently their attitudes toward the campaign. Most critical work in discourse is related to social power of groups (van Dijk, 2004). Power or “dominance” is reproduced through language, and it plays a significant role in the establishment of dominant groups (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Dominance is defined here as “the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality” (van Dijk, 1993). Control over specific discourses would result in gaining social goods (power, money, status, information, knowledge, fame) in a society, and these discourses (dominant discourses) would empower specific group (dominant groups) who have less conflict with other discourses (Gee, 1996; van Dijk, 2001).

One might conclude that controlling the context involves controlling the situation, setting, on-going action, participants in communicative events and social roles, in addition to controlling mental representations, such as “goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 335). These mental representations add insights into the mechanism of how public opinion is formed and changes over time; furthermore, what factors contribute to the formation of a particular opinion. After reviewing the theoretical account of the methodological framework, it is logical to present the research methods that were used to achieve the goals of this thesis.

3.6 Intertextuality

Apart from the critical components of this research, “Intertextuality” and content analysis was used to analyse the text. Fairclough (1992) discusses analysis of text as part of discourse analysis, which needs to connect the analysis of text to that of social context. The textual analysis subsumes two complementary types of analysis: intertextual and linguistic analysis. The linguistic analysis that shows how text draws upon linguistics systems will not be used in this study. Intertextuality simply involves adoptions of aspects of existing text by speakers/writers into a new text either through “citation, attribution or references, and ... hybridization of one genre or text type with another” (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p. 52). The first part of Intertextuality can be seen in practice when news networks use external sources of information and attribute the content of news and judgements to these sources. Intertextual analysis emphasizes

the dependence of texts upon society and history in the form of the available resources within the order of discourse (Fairclough, 1992).

In order to analyse the online discussion related to the Kony 2012 campaign, we need to view how the cross-cultural meanings interrelate with text to create a new text. In this research, Intertextuality analysis was employed based on Fairclough's framework of interactional analysis in studies of media perception (1992). Fairclough discusses the use of intertextual analysis in the deconstruction of media messages. Audiences appropriate the deconstruction concept through a real life narrative of media use and opinion formation. For instance, a viewer of news programmes develops a story about his/her viewing practice: he/she watches a news story, assimilates it, thinks about it from his/her angle, and concludes a point of view about it. The concluded viewpoint is indeed attached to specific social ideologies (Fairclough, 1992).

Another key justification for using intertextual analysis is to ascertain what social experiences participants are more likely to rely on in consumption and interpretation of media and what other factors that media messages are assimilated into in the interpretation process (Fairclough, 1992). The other aspect that was kept in mind prior to the analysis was that it is insightful to go beyond the moment of reception to assess how media messages are used and transformed in various domains of individuals' lives (Fairclough, 1992).

3.7 Content Analysis

Phillips and Hardy (2002) articulate that content analysis as a traditional approach might lend itself to discourse analysis. Content analysis in a more interpretative form can be used to connect the contextual content to the broader discursive context, such as identifying themes and rhetorical strategies which in turn end up connected to speakers/ writers and their audiences (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Content analysis provides an empirical basis for tracking and monitoring shifts in public opinion as discussed by Stemler (2001). Content analysis has a long history in research dating back to the eighteenth century (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It was used as a method to analyse hymns, newspapers, advertisements and political speeches in the nineteenth century (Kassarjian, 1977). Content analysis was used during World War II (Riffe et al., 2005; Krippendorff, 2004) in the service and dedicated to extracting

military intelligence from the domestic propaganda of the Nazi enemy (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009). Analysing text for propaganda has led to changing the concept of content analysis from a purely descriptive form to making reliable and valid inferences from textual matter (Krippendorff & Bock, 2009).

Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use” (p. 18). The text in Krippendorff’s definition is not restricted to the written word because it may include art, images, maps, sounds, symbols, and videos (Krippendorff, 2004) which has been discussed earlier (see 3.3). However, Neuendorf’s definition of content analysis is particularly appropriate for an analysis of mass messaging on Facebook. Neuendorf (2002) explains that this technique is “a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific methods”... [including reliability, validity, generalizability, and hypothesis testing], “and it is not limited to measured types of variables or the context in which the messages are created and presented” (p. 10).

Furthermore, content analysis as a method has distinguishing features, which are objective, quantitative and systematic (Kassarjian, 1977; Stacks, 2002). The analysis of news networks’ posts, and participants’ comments on Facebook was primarily qualitative. Qualitative analysis deals with underlying meanings of the messages, and it “provides insight into the values of the communication or messages under study” (Stacks, 2002, p. 109). This type of analysis directly investigates subjective experiences, studies diversity, and allows for naturalistic description rather than testing for general laws; even though qualitative research for some researchers is judged to be unscientific as argued by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Moreover, the main concerns connected with qualitative analysis are reliability and validity which are caused by the qualitative analysis’ attitudinal nature that makes text hard to study, so it should be counted via some measurement systems (Stacks, 2002). Therefore, a quantitative approach was used to support this qualitative research. Morgan (1998) argues that it is impractical to give the qualitative and quantitative approaches equal priority. This study was designed to use quantitative preliminary research to support the study that is principally qualitative (Morgan, 1998). The knowledge provided by the small-scale use of quantifications guided the decisions that that the analyst made in the qualitative study. In term of this research, quantitative analysis of the participants’

comments was conducted to determine the main trends in public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign which is illustrated based on the qualitative analysis of the main attitudes. Furthermore, detailed quantitative analysis of the main trend in public opinion is provided to support this qualitative research.

Compared with other analysis techniques, content analysis has several advantages. Content analysis can be conducted without much training (Neuendorf, 2002). Also, it has features of being unobtrusive and useful in dealing with a large volume of data (Neuendorf, 2002). Moreover, the financial costs of doing content analysis are minimal (Kondracki, Wellman & Amundson, 2002) because content analysis and coding operation require logical and conceptualizing effort that can be conducted by only one researcher. It is important to acknowledge that this technique extends far beyond simple word frequency counts (Stemler, 2001). It allows researchers to make valid inferences from data to their context in order to provide knowledge and a practical guide to action (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). It can yield theoretical and useful generalizations with minimal loss of information from the original document (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992). Lastly, there is no time constraint related to the whole process compared to other methods (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

On the other hand, there are many issues facing the feasibility of content analysis. There are challenges related to its being limited to recorded communication (written, verbal, or visual), the type of statistical procedures applied to data, and amount of time required to code data (Downe- Wamboldt, 1992). Stemler (2001) presents three problems that can occur when data is assembled for content analysis. First, if a significant amount of data from the population is missing, the content must be abandoned. Second, if records do not match the definition of the data required for analysis, they should be discarded. Third, some content can match the requirements for analysis, but cannot be coded because they contain missing or ambiguous content (Stemler, 2001). Finally, there is no simple guideline for content analysis because each enquiry in the research is distinctive, and the results depend significantly on the skills, analytic abilities, and style of the analyst (Elo & Kyngas, 2007). Therefore, the drawn conclusion is representing the text that is included in the sample only (Kondracki et al, 2002).

There are two levels in which Stacks (2002) argues that content analysis may be conducted on: manifest content and latent content. Both manifest and latent content

will be combined and employed in this study. The majority of literature on content analysis is focused on the manifest content (Neuendorf, 2002). Manifest content is what a researcher physically sees and counts (e.g., the number of times specific figures mentioned in a report), and refers to the actual word, character, item, space, or time measure being counted (Stacks, 2002). The early definition of content analysis that is explained by Berelson in 1952 was limited to manifest content only (as cited in Krippendorff, 2004), but it is imperative to evaluate the meanings of the messages that cannot be extracted from the surface (Stacks, 2002). Therefore, this research investigated the latent content of messages to explore what ideologies, agenda, and beliefs are implied. In other words, latent content can be understood from detecting the underlying aspects of studied text (Boyatzis, 1998). Parker, Saundage and Yao (2011, p. 2) explain that studying social media using a qualitative approach would provide insight into “people’s viewpoints, feelings, attitudes and intentions than directive questions in surveys”. Content analysis has been used earlier to study the effect of media on public opinion when Tenney, Journalism professor at Columbia University, called for comprehensive content analysis of the press to see how the public concerns changed across the country in 1913 (as cited in Krippendorff & Bock, 2009).

Weber (1990) points out several purposes that content analysis can be used for and which in turn can assist in meeting the academic goal of conducting this research. Content analysis can be used to compare levels of communication, “identify the intentions and other characteristics of communicator” (Weber, p. 9), detect propaganda, reflect the cultural patterns of societies, and specify the trends in communication content (Weber).

This research studied content on cable news networks’ pages on Facebook. Facebook was selected because it is considered as a dominant social medium, and it was seen to have ultimate influence on participants of political campaigns (Eastman, Ferguson & Klein, 2006). Moreover, cable news networks’ posts are accessible and available to everyone which was one of the factors that affected the researcher’s selection of data. The audiences of cable news networks often use interpretations to engage their friends and other fans (Eastman et al., 2006). The simplest interpretation patterns fall along the lines of approval and disapproval. The advent of social networking sites applications (SNSs) means the discussion of traditional mass media

coverage expanded to include SNSs, and much time is devoted to conversations about media coverage (Eastman et al., 2006). SNSs have offered opportunities for audiences and the mass media to connect to each other. With specific regard to the core of the research, the interaction between cable news networks is transparent, and the influence on public opinion can be easily traced. The researcher believed that Facebook pages administrated by news networks could help her to obtain results regarding the influence of media on public opinion directly. Moreover, information provided by cable news networks is more reliable than anonymous pages because information is supposed to be trustworthy, and follow certain criteria “news values” that guide news selection (see 2.1). Finally, there are few studies that used qualitative content analysis to examine online discourse on social media platforms as mentioned earlier (Parker, Saundage & Lee, 2011).

3.8 Challenges to Applying Content Analysis to Social Media Content

There are many challenges associated with applying qualitative content analysis to social media content. The major challenge is related to the ephemeral nature of social media content (Parker et al., 2011). Both news networks and participants have more control over how content is organized and distributed, so they can withdraw their content later. Furthermore, the conversation in social media occurs over a long period, usually with no ending point. Kassirjian (1977) discusses that the data can be amenable to a statistical mode of analysis not only for a precise summary of findings, but also for inference and interpretation. Therefore, this thesis used quantification, which is considered to be the most distinctive part of content analysis, and finally the extent to which a given analytical category is emphasized was measured using a number of frequencies and percentages, and then qualitatively interpreted.

3.9 Practical Approach to Analysis

In qualitative research, the analysis begins during data collection as the data already gathered is analysed and shapes the on-going collection of data (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000). Mayring (2000) discusses that analysis can be initiated by deciding the preliminary level of abstraction guided by the research questions. Herring (2010) asserts that despite the existence of various forms of analysis, including themes, languages and networks, all should be employed based on research objectives and unit

of analysis. Parker et al. (2011) argue that regardless of the approach used in the research, the ultimate objective of the qualitative analysis is still to arrive at categories or themes that categorise the interpretation of the content (Parker et al., 2011).

3.9.1 Data collection and sampling.

Collis and Hussey (2003) believe that the selection and collection of data must be determined by the objectives and requirements of the research. The data was collected manually on March 21, 2012 after two weeks of covering the Kony 2012 campaign news by news networks. Downe-Wamboldt (1992) discusses that data collection can be either influenced by the researcher's knowledge, experience, bias, and perspective or by which data sources are available to the researcher. This research aimed at defining the factors which affect the adoption of certain attitudes, in addition to examining the influence of classic factors, such as media and public in order to draw a picture of what might be public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign on Facebook. The method that was used was expected to study the content-based phenomenon inductively, in other words, using the conventional approach to infer explicit (manifest) meaning, implicit (latent) or/and mixed meanings (Parker et al., 2011) in order to understand the context of public opinion. The first step in the process of data collection was to select a sample from the population to study.

When thousands or millions of relevant content units are available, it is impractical for the researcher to examine them all, so there should be a sample to study (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). The sample can be defined as a subset of units representing the entire population being studied. The population of all data sources must be identified firstly by selecting the sample that represents the phenomenon of interest (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). This research investigated public opinion on four cable news networks' pages on Facebook. The population in this research was news networks and audiences' comments on cables news networks on Facebook; namely, ABC News, Al-Jazeera English (AJE), BBC World News, and CNN International (CNNI) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Four cable news networks' Facebook pages

	ABC News	Al-Jazeera English	CNN International	BBC World News
Date of Establishment	1945	2006	1985	1991
Country of origin	USA	Qatar (Middle East)	USA	UK
Facebook "Likes"	839,981	1,295,266	1,569,256	2,656,166

All of the news networks listed in Table 1 are English language speaking and have large numbers of fans (see Table 1). They are based on different geographical areas, except for the CNNI and ABC News which are located in the same country but reputed to have markedly different viewpoints (Groshek, 2008). The years that these networks were established are provided because the dates that these networks joined Facebook are not available. The majority of the public is likely to believe that the news media is biased because the dominant discourse in the American politics supports the idea that the news produced by leading national media such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN, ABC, AP, and CBS are likely to support either the liberal or the conservative wing (Entman, 2010). Hence, it was imperative to see how the American campaign was framed by non-American news networks, AJE and BBC World News. Christian, Fackler, and Ferré (2012) argue that AJE does not represent the Anglo-American view, unlike other networks such as CNN International and BBC World News. Lastly, all are international news channels except for ABC News, which was selected for representing the American public opinion because this was where the campaign originated. The second and most important motivation to select ABC News was the fact that it was the first news network to post Kony 2012 campaign related material.

A time frame of two weeks was used to track the development and change in public opinion toward the Kony 2012 campaign: from March 8th, 2012 (the first day the campaign covered by news networks) to March 21st, 2012. This period was deemed adequate for measuring the development of public opinion due to three reasons: existence of sufficient amount of data flowing from different media platforms, complexity of the topic, and the assumption that audiences will lose their interest in the campaign after two weeks. Moreover, Yell (2012) discusses that the

subsequent two-week period after an event can indicate the degree of saturation of a particular news story effectively.

The sample that was analysed in this research was the first five posts for each news network (except for BBC World News), and their fifty comments (50 comments per post). The sample was used to measure the change of public opinion that might be caused by news framing or participants themselves by monitoring the discursive practice. An average of 250 comments were analysed for each news network. BBC World News posted once about Kony 2012, but the first 250 were collected to equal the total comments to posts of other networks. In brief, sixteen posts and 1,000 comments to these posts have been studied. This sample was deemed sufficient for the scope and time constraints of the thesis, even though large numbers make a contribution to greater accuracy of findings. Nevertheless, collecting a manageable size assists in preserving the context, and consequently increases the validity of interpretation and understanding of meanings generated from the analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.9.2 Unit of Analysis

Neuendorf (2002) defines the unit of analysis as “the element on which data are analysed and for which findings are reported” (p. 13). De Wever, Schellens, Valcke & van Keer (2006) suggest that there are three techniques for choosing units of analysis in order to analyse transcripts of online asynchronous discussion groups. Firstly, the researcher can consider an individual’s sentence or a message as a single unit of analysis. Secondly, it can be done by identifying a consistent “theme” in a message (De Wever et al., 2006; Gunter, 2000). The term “theme” is considered to represent the thread of underlying meaning through meaning units, codes or categories, on the interpretative level (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The third technique is to approach the complete message that users post at a specific moment of the discussion as the unit of analysis (De Wever et al., 2006).

Applying the second option, thematic unit analysis was the most appropriate to study audiences’ comments representing public opinion for several reasons. The key justification for not adopting the single comment as a unit of analysis is that the single comment can consist of several sentences that have several themes. Therefore, the researcher had to divide the comments into smaller component themes before they

were placed in the proper categories. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) suggested that the category that includes more than one theme can be divided into sub-themes.

Moreover, the theme as a unit of analysis was relevant because the thematic units are more likely to reflect values, beliefs and attitudes when studying a certain public opinion phenomenon. Also, it reveals the latent meaning of the content. Since the collected data may imply multiple meanings (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992), “themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). This might affect the reliability of the analysed data. However, Kassirjian (1977) argues that this unit might be more difficult to analyse than considering the whole message.

After an appropriate unit of analysis selection, the units should be coded (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Coding refers to the process of classifying units of analysis or data into categories (Ferguson, 2002). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain that there are three distinct approaches in qualitative content analysis: conventional (inductive), directed, and summative. Conventional content analysis is used with a study design that aims to describe a phenomenon, and this design is appropriate when an existing research literature or theory on a specific phenomenon is limited. For this approach, relevant research findings can be addressed in the discussion section of the research. However, a “directed approach” to content analysis validates or extends a theoretical framework or theory. Existing research studies would help researchers to focus on the research questions as this provides predictions about relationships among variables; hence, it determines the initial coding design. The third approach is summative which begins with identifying and calculating certain content in the text in order to understand the contextual use of the content. It can be referred to as a manifest content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The conventional content analysis was used in this research because the existing literature on public opinion is limited to statistics and quantitative analysis, and few studies have examined public opinion combined with the effect of the media and public on Facebook. Also, this researcher used summative content analysis, as the research started with calculating the content forming the major trends of the campaigns to understand the context of public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign. In this research, the researcher avoided adopting preconceived categories; instead she allowed the categories to flow from data, and immersed herself into it in order to explore new insights of the data proposed for study. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) discuss

the process of conducting conventional analysis. First, the data should be read repeatedly to obtain the sense of the whole, and then examined word by word to derive the codes by highlighting content from the text to capture key concepts and thoughts. After that, the text is approached by making notes about the first impressions and initial analysis. During this process, new labels for codes appear which are reflective of more than one key thought which often results directly from text and constitutes the first coding schemes. Based on how the emergent codes are related, the codes are sorted into categories, which are used to organize codes into meaningful clusters.

Despite the conventional approach being helpful in gaining direct information from research without proposing preconceived categories, it might fail to understand the context and cause the findings not to represent the data accurately (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Another challenge in using of this approach is that it could be confused with other qualitative methods such as grounded theory. Grounded theory, qualitative content analysis, and discourse analysis are all similar in the way they all involve a semiotic mode of analysis (Parker et al, 2011). However, the conventional approach is limited in both sampling and theory use (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.9.3 Data analysis

As discussed earlier, this study aimed to examine how public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign is formed and developed over a period of two weeks on four news networks pages on Facebook and in relation to other factors such as news framing, public influence, and others that might emerge from this research. Both data collection and analysis were conducted manually and by using the qualitative software Nvivo 9.2. During the process of data collection, the analyst wrote down notes regarding the dramatic changes in participants' opinions. The selected news networks' posts and audiences' comments were copied and pasted onto a Microsoft word document, to be easily imported to Nvivo 9.2 qualitative software. The themes of content were identified and the data classified using Nvivo 9.2, which also was used to assist the researcher to retrieve and revise the codes directly from the nodes of the software. The nodes represented the themes that formed the categories.

The main categories of public opinion of the Kony 2012 in this study fell under the lines of support and opposition, and being neutral to the campaign. In this

research, when the language and other indicators failed to identify the position of the participants toward the campaign, it was considered as “unsaid”, and it was not considered in the data presentation. Only the statistical details for the main opinion are presented in Chapter four due to the restricted work-frame. Moreover, the word frequency tool in Nvivo 9.2 was used to calculate the frequencies of certain words in the posts and comments.

On the other hand, participants may use same words for different purposes, and certain words may imply several meanings (e.g., the word “state” can mean government, country, condition or stage), so it was imperative to check the content of data manually. Furthermore, dealing with data made the researcher familiar with the context. Capturing the context of the content can be facilitated by repeated reading (Parker et al., 2011). The researcher checked the content linked to posts and analysed links to discover what type of framing or attitude is implicitly adopted to place the post in the correct category. One could consider the need to study why users of Facebook click “like” instead of writing their comments. The first most liked five comments on each of the news networks were studied. Moreover, most liked comments were analysed to see why they were favoured by the public, and how they influenced attitudes of others regarding the issue.

It is imperative to keep in mind that some comments will be presented as “quotes” in the next chapter; even though they have spelling mistakes and use slang or abbreviations that might not be familiar. The most liked participants’ comments and other comments that are used to illustrate the picture of analysis are referred to as “ABC 1-3, March 8 at 4:31pm”, for instance, in order to keep the anonymity and to protect the privacy of the participants. In the former example, “ABC” represents the origin of comment (ABC News), “1-3”: number 1 indicates the order of the post, followed by the order of comment which is 3, and then the date and time of posting will be provided. It is imperative to note that all comments were posted in 2012. However, for the BBC with only one post, the comments will be identified with the order of the comment only, in addition to the time of the posting; such as the “BBC 23, March 8 at 4:31pm”.

Entman (2004) argues that even though the framing can be seen as a unifying theme in political communication, “it has been vulnerable to criticism of an imprecise catchall that means slightly different things to each researcher employing it” (p. 5).

Analysing how the news was framed or identifying the framing effect was not an easy task. The videos and articles attached to posts of news networks were transcribed and analysed. The quantitative descriptions of opinion and categorisation of participants' comments cannot provide an accurate description of the news' effect, so the researcher analysed how participants responded to framing news by looking at the characteristics of participants and the social group that they identify themselves with. Hopefully, this thesis will contribute to the theoretical part of media effect research by applying CDA, qualitative and quantitative approaches, and classic theories applied to mass media. Matthes (2009) argues that the media description of the frames are deep and with "detailed quotes, but without quantification" (p. 131). This research worked to define a framework to employ in this qualitative research, the missing quantification as identified by Matthes (2009).

3.10 Reliability and Validity of Research

Reliability can be seen as an agreement among analysts about the accuracy of categorizing content during analysis (Riffe et al., 2005). The researcher should take into account achieving reliability initially with defining categories and subcategories that are relevant to study objectives, because without clarity of the concepts' definitions, researchers will fail to apply the analysis properly when examining findings. Hence, this may cause failure in getting reliable data, so content and replication by other coders will be of doubtful value (Riffe et al., 2005).

The major criteria for the reliability in this study depended on the researcher's ability to formulate a category and provide component's definition of categories, so the coder will agree on which sample of population belongs to a certain category and which do not (Kassarjian, 1977). The categories in content analysis could reflect the formulated thinking, purpose of study and hypotheses (Kassarjian, 1977).

In this research project, the researcher had access to a wider view of reality than participants. She was not able to define the description of representation of the categories without access to the data. With specific regard to public opinion research, the same content may suggest multiple meanings or themes but cannot fall under two categories because each category should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The exclusive categories exist when no analysis unit falls between two data points (Stemler, 2001) while the exhaustive category requirement is met when the results

represent all units without exception (Stemler, 2001). The researcher compared the performance of one or more data decision-making processes with the performance of a procedure that was set to be correct which is known as “reproducibility”. Reproducibility is the most significant interpretation and measure of reliability (Krippendorff, 2004a), and it is the extent to which a process can be repeated by different analysts, under various conditions, at different locations, or using various but equivalent measurement instruments (Krippendorff, 2004a).

Therefore, after completing the content coding, there was a need to check the reliability of the results, which also would aid in addressing potential bias. Written instructions for coding communication content were given to another coder, a Master’s student of Communication Studies from the AUT from a different background to the researcher. Due to the existence of the large quantity of data to be analysed in this research project, a random sample of material was selected, and given to the second analyst. After she had completed the task, the researcher analysed the results for consistency of responses. Ferguson (2002) argues that the percentage of agreement varies from one study to another; therefore, the content analysts concurred on 90 % as a percentage of agreement. In the case that the percentage of agreement is less than 90 %, the researcher should repeat the coding process until achieving the percentage of agreement (Ferguson, 2002). The researcher repeated this step twice until she got an agreement of 95 %; therefore, it can be said that the coding was reliable.

3.11 Summary

In brief, this chapter discussed key methods employed for this study and provided an in-depth theoretical discussion of CDA as a framework. Emphasising the practical side of the research provided a frame for gathering and analysing data from cable news networks’ pages on Facebook. The statistical description that was used in this qualitative research to enhance the validity of the results will be illustrated in the following chapter. The advantages and disadvantages of methods and framework adopted have been discussed in order to provide a balanced account of the methodology used to achieve the goals of this research. An outline of methods to check the reliability of the research is provided to ensure that the findings reflect

patterns of public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign and they draw a picture of the factors that contributed to the formation of opinion.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings that have been concluded from this research. The first part will track the shifts in public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign on the selected cable news networks' pages on Facebook. The change in the percentages of the favouring and opposing attitudes over the period (March 8- March 21, 2012) will be compared to two factors: a) how news is framed, and b) revelation of characteristics of participants or their interactions with the social network that they identify themselves with. The trend of public opinion that is formed over a period of five posts will be illustrated using graphs. Moreover, statistical analysis of the reasons provided by participants to support or oppose the Kony 2012 campaign will be given for each post. The second part will present the features of public opinion that are related to the interaction of participants online within their social networks to see how it affects the opinion formed, in addition to analysing the most liked comments from the selected news networks

4.2 Public Opinion of the Kony 2012 Campaign in Response to Posts of Cable News Networks' Pages on Facebook

In this section, the framing influence will be measured by comparing the comments of participants. Selected comments from participants will be used to demonstrate key changes in public opinion patterns on each cable news network's page which will be studied and presented separately.

4.2.1 ABC News.

The American news channel, ABC News, was the first news network to post news related to the Kony 2012 campaign, but this reason was not convincing enough to compare it with other leading international news networks like AJE, BBC World News, and CNNI. During collection and analysis of ABC News posts and participants' comments, interesting results emerged from the American channel that might represent the American public sphere. Only supporting and oppositional attitudes are presented in graphs of this chapter because the researcher focused on major trends (i.e., approval and disapproval, which might affect the decision of public. The missing

data would affect the reliability of the research. The researcher employed the thematic unit of analysis. Neutral attitudes were represented in sentences with more than one part and unit of analysis. Those different themes were connected using words such as “but” or “however”. If the researcher divided these comments into two parts, she would cancel an individual opinion which is part of public opinion.

4.2.1.1 ABC News first post.

In response to the first ABC News post, Figure 5 shows that little agreement among public opinion on opposition to the campaign existed. About 65% of the oppositional opinions were detected in participants’ comments to the first post. In the graphs that are used in this chapter, the brown boxes represent the focus of news networks’ posts, while the grey boxes contain the main reasons given for opposing the campaign at a certain point in time, and which is detailed in the statistical analysis of the opposing opinions.

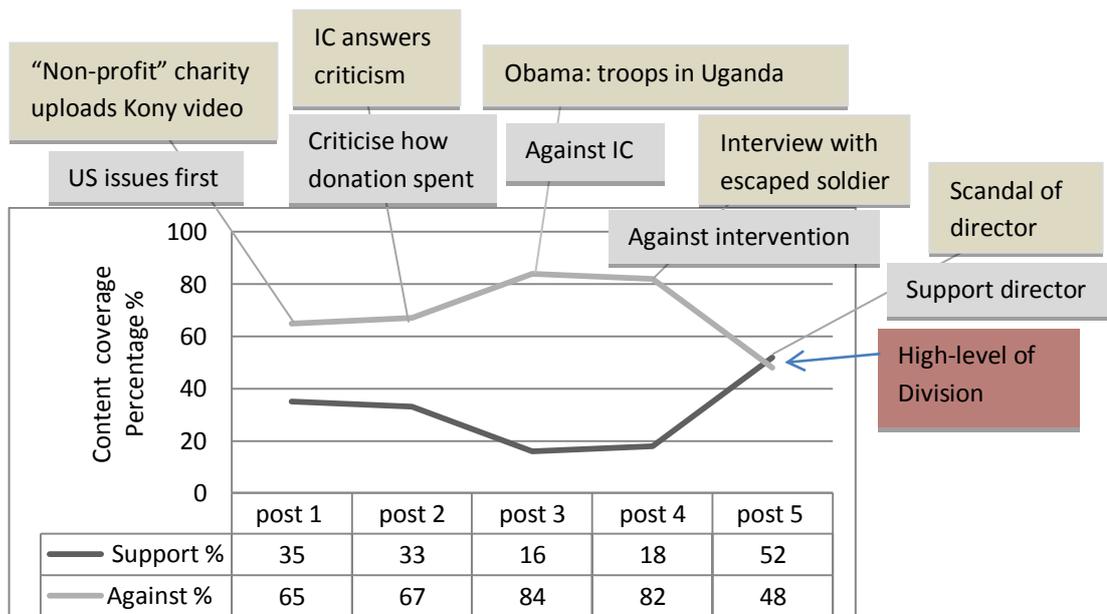


Figure 5. Development of public opinion on ABC News page on Facebook

Table 2 provides the content of the posts of the ABC news network, numbers of likes and comments, and the focus of the posts. In the first post, ABC describes the IC campaign as “non-profit” (see Table 2). The attached links are listed in Table 2 under the subtitle of “additional reading.” The linked article to this post discusses Kony 2012 as a social phenomenon, who Kony is, efforts of the US military intervention to capture Kony, and future plans of the IC organization.

Table 2

ABC News Kony 2012 Campaign Related Posts on Facebook

Date	Cable News Network's post	Number of comments	Number of likes	Focus of Post
8/3/2012	1. The nonprofit charity Invisible Children Inc. uploaded the video Monday to bring attention to Kony and the rebel group Lord's Resistance Army • Additional reading: 'Kony 2012' Campaign Against Uganda Warlord Takes Over Internet	328	1,110	A video on the internet against Uganda warlord by a non-profit organization
9/3/2012	2. Invisible Children Inc. said its intention was to "create a cultural tipping point" even as critics took to the Internet to recount their concerns. • Additional reading: 'Kony2012' Video Draws Critics to Charity Filmmaker	321	475	Main criticism of Invisible Children campaign and its answers to criticism
9/3/2012	3. Jake Tapper talked to President Obama about Kony last year, this is what he had to say • Additional reading: President Obama Talks About Joseph Kony http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/03/president-obama-talks-about-joseph-kony/?=id2	168	418	Obama's decision to send military to Uganda to capture Kony and US troops already in Uganda from last year
	4. "It brought back some memories," he said. "The more time is ticking, the more people are dying, the more people are still suffering the more people [are] being abducted." • Additional reading: 'Kony 2012' Escaped Child Soldier Supports Movie That Went Viral	113	700	An interview with escaped child soldiers who supported the Kony 2012 campaign
	5. The director of the Kony 2012 viral video Jason Russell was arrested in San Diego last night for intoxication and masturbating in public, according to reports • Additional reading: 'Kony 2012' Activist Filmmaker Arrested	356	404	Director of Kony 2012 arrested for masturbating in public

Overall, there were 328 comments and 1,110 “likes” responding to the first post. One of the first responses warned others to check the organization before they donate: “Check into the charity before donating” (ABC 1-1, March 8 at 4:31pm). The internal American issues mentioned in 38 out of 50 comments included starving children, homeless families, rising gas prices, corrupt government, unemployment, senior citizens, disabled people, drugs, rape, and other crimes. Similarly, the most liked comment to this post was against the campaign for the same reason mentioned above,

Why can't we be this passionate about our own country and the war were already involved in. I wish we would focus more on what's going on in our own back yard rather than on the other side of the planet. Not that they don't deserve it, I just think we need to straighten ourselves out first. Just a thought... (ABC 1-4, March 8 at 4:34pm).

The comment did not outline a specific domestic American issue, but it reflected a sense of patriotism similar to the other comments where the participants used the plural personal pronoun “we” to express membership to a group, where the group is a nationality. “We” was used 42 times in the first 50 comments. Moreover, “Our” was mentioned 20 times accompanied with the word “country” as it is shown in Figure 6.

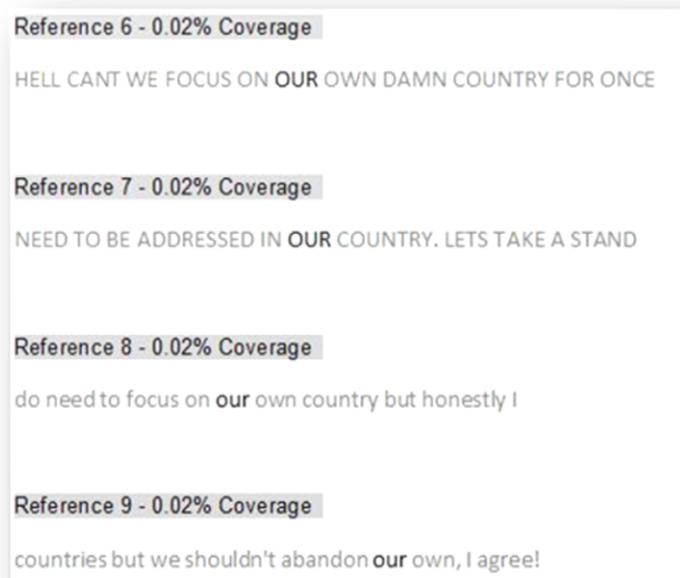


Figure 6. Use of “our” by the ABC News audiences.

Statistical analysis of the reasons that were given for the major opinions (support and opposition) was conducted. The statistical analysis showed that 70% of the

oppositional attitudes focused on the internal issue of the USA, as is highlighted in the first column “Post 1” in Table 3.

Table 3

Statistical Analysis of the Reasons Provided in Opposition to the Kony 2012 Campaign on the ABC News Page

Reasons for opposition	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3	Post 4	Post 5
US is after Ugandan oil & other natural sources	-	13.2	12.5	12.3	-
Kony 2012 campaign is Propaganda	5.9	8	2.9	3	2.9
Against the US military intervention	6.5	12.6	18.6	23.3	7.6
Against IC and its video	1.6	13.1	28.3	8	13.2
Criticism on how donation spent	8.2	20.1	9.6	6.6	1.8
Against video’s director	-	-	-	-	53
Other issues more important than campaign	7.0	15.7	17	11.7	13.7
Internal US issues should be a priority	70.6	2.7	3.2	11.8	-
Information provided outdated/ misleading	-	14.2	8.3	22.8	7.4

4.2.1.2 ABC News second post.

For the second post, there is almost no change in public opinion of the IC campaign as the increase in opposition is only two per cent (see Figure 5). Counter-arguments were presented in the second post and its attached video (see Table 2). The second post focused on the criticism of how the IC spent the donation and the answer of the organization to this criticism. Responsibility framing (see 2.8) was used where the IC was credited for misspent donations, which emphasized the economic consequence frame for the ABC News audiences.

The participants justified their opposition to the campaign by criticising how the donation was spent by the campaign, which constituted just over 20% of the opposition to this particular post (see Table 3). Others major reasons that were given for opposing the Kony 2012 campaign include: information given by the video is misleading or outdated, opposition to military intervention, other issues are more

important than the Kony 2012 campaign, Kony is propaganda, opposition to the IC organization, and the belief that the US is after the Ugandan oil (see Table 3).

4.2.1.3 ABC News third post.

In the third post, ABC News provided a link to an interview with US president Obama from October 2011 by Jake Trapper regarding the deployment of 100 Special operations troops to Central Africa last year (see Table 2). The transcript of the interview was also provided. In this interview, President Obama states, "What they can do is provide the logistical support that is needed, the advice, the training and the logistical support that hopefully will allow this kind of stuff to stop".

The issue was interpreted from a moral perspective to indicate that what America is doing is preventing the atrocities in Uganda. President Obama explains that the American troops will not fight, "They are not going to be in a situation where they are called upon to hunt down the Lord's Resistance Army or actively fire on them, but they will be in a position to protect themselves". This part of the interview represented the opinion of the USA administration and reassured the American public about the fact that no troops will fight in Uganda. This could explain why the public opinion is fairly united on the opposition to the campaign, which reaches peak with 84% (see Figure 5).

Interestingly, evidence showed that the high opposition was not caused by the opposition to the American intervention; instead, the major content of the opposition was against the IC organization and its video "Kony 2012" as it is shown in the third column (see Table 3).

ABC News participated in comments by postings links to news about the Kony 2012 campaign from its website (see Figure 7). The linked news provided different perspectives that were derived from current debate of the campaign at that time.



Figure 7. The intervention of ABC News in comments.

4.2.1.4 ABC News fourth post

Moving to the fourth post, ABC News quoted words from an interview with a young Ugandan who had escaped from Kony rebels’ camp. In this post (see Figure 8), the emotional frame was employed, represented in emotionally laden words like “dying”, “suffering”, “memories” and “abducted”. The first comment to this post, with its enormous question marks, “What can we do to help change this situation?????????” (ABC 4-1, March 10 at 11:41am) seems to be influenced by the ABC post which reflects a sense of compassion.



Figure 8. Quote from interview with escaped child soldiers.

Interestingly, this compassion did not seem to last as Figure 5 showed that the shift towards supporting the campaign was only two per cent. The statistical analysis for the

fourth post showed that 23% of opposition content was focused on the US military intervention in Uganda (see Table 3).

We fought our own revolution. Time for each country to fight their own instead of depending on US (ABC 4-4, March 10 at 11:42am).

The emphasis on the patriotic attitude among the participants of the ABC News was still existent, with the use of “our own” and “US” as it is shown in the above comment.

4.2.1.5 ABC News fifth post.

By this point, the film director was detained by the police. In this post, ABC News referred to “intoxication” and “masturbating” in public as reasons for the arrest (see Table 2). The focus in this context was on an issue related to an individual (the director) which made the post classified under the human interest and morality frames. The first comment to the fifth post received 17 “likes” and asked the others to focus on the campaign rather than other issues:

People should concentrate on what Kony is doing and not anything else. Don't forget the children (ABC 5-1, March 17 at 9:27am).

Here public opinion became divided with 52% supporting the campaign and 48 % against it, mainly as a result of the sympathy that participants showed toward the director. Moreover, participants turned the discussion to be about the director. There were 37 references to the director using the third person pronoun “He”.

Still what he has done by raising awareness for The Invisible Children is amazing (ABC 5-9, March 17 at 9:30am).

He did more than any of us have to not only help other people but make it a better place...(ABC 5-39, March 17 at 10:50am).

As another form of expressing support toward the director, ten comments responded to the fifth post accusing ABC News of being biased or lying about the detention of the former. The following is an example of these comments:

OMG some of you people are brutal! The story reports that the guy is having some kind of medical issue and it sounds like he had some kind of breakdown. Can we at least wait until we get more info and give him the benefit of the doubt before crucifying him? Cheesh. (ABC 5-3, March 17 at 9:55am).

It is important to state that the comments to the fifth post, which report detention of director, led the percentage of support to surpass the percentage of opposition for the first time on ABC News. As this point, participants’ interest in topics like oil and domestic American issues declined noticeably.

In summary, human interest, economic consequence, and morality frames were used in the ABC News posts. It was obvious that the first ten comments to the selected posts of ABC News seemed to respond to the news network's post. The general focus of the comments was compatible with the topic of the framed news once, when ABC News posted news about criticism of misspent the donation by the campaign. Being a member of the same group (people identifying with the USA) did not work in the campaign's favour. Even though ABC News appeared to present counter arguments about the campaign, participants felt that internal issues of the USA should be a priority for the government. Furthermore, the number of "likes" for the selected posts decreased over time showing a drop in interest, but increased again on the fourth post when the escaped child soldier portrayed the suffering of the Ugandan children (see Figure 9). Interestingly, this post received the least number of comments.

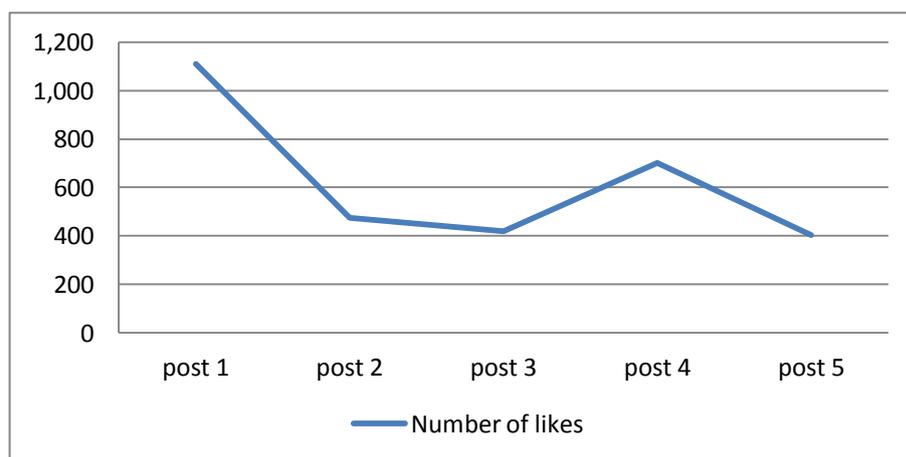


Figure 9. Number of likes to ABC News' post of the Kony 2012 campaign.

4.2.2 CNN International

CNN is considered to be one of the most influential news networks and its coverage of the Gulf War and other crises of the early 1990s led to coin the term "CNN effects", which was discussed in chapter two (see 2.7). However, as mentioned in Chapter three, CNNI and ABC News are reputed for having different agendas. The CNNI coverage for the Kony 2012 campaign received mixed reactions as we will see in the following sub-sections.

4.2.2.1 CNNI first post.

The first post in Table 4 questions whether the audiences watched the Kony 2012 video and whether this video affected the Ugandan situation. The adjective “violent” is used to describe the war criminal Kony, “The violent warlord video has reached millions of people around the world”. The term “warlord” that CNNI used framed the negative attitude toward Kony 2012. “Millions” exaggerated the scope of the viewers who watched the video. It can be seen from Table 4 that CNNI has used “Kony2012” as title for the campaign related posts to distinguish news related to Kony. In this particular post, CNNI investigated whether audiences believe that the video will affect the situation in Uganda. The attached video ended with accusation that the campaign is simplistic.

Table 4.

CNN International Kony 2012 Campaign Related Posts on Facebook

Date	Cable News Network's post	Number of comments	Number of likes	Focus of Post
9/3/2012	1. KONY 2012: http://on.cnn.com/zdeDeG The violent warlord video has reached millions of people around the world in a matter of days. Have you seen it? How do you think it will impact the situation in Uganda?"	275	1146	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kony 2012 video on internet • CNNI questions audiences for opinions of video influence
12/3/2012	2. CONFRONTING CRITICS: http://on.cnn.com/xhc1le The nonprofit group behind 'Kony 2012' says it will release a new film Monday to answer its critics. What do you think of the group's methods and strategy?	133	417	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New film to answer criticism of donation • CNNI questions audiences for opinions of campaigns' strategy
13/3/2012	3. KONY 2012: Ugandan activist TMS Ruge says more children die from disease daily in Uganda than during Kony's 25-year reign of terror. http://on.cnn.com/w7HLJh "Where are the slick viral videos for them", he asks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional readings: Opinion: Why Kony 2012 created the wrong buzz -CNN.com" 	199	596	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nodding disease in Uganda • Lack of African voices in the film
14/3/2012	4. KONY 2012 has been watched by millions, but Ugandans have just seen it for the first time. http://on.cnn.com/zh7ZzS CNN's David McKenzie was at the screening with them to see how they felt about it	125	524	Screening Kony 2012 for first time in Lira caused anger of Ugandans
20/3/2012	5. #Kony2012: This is what Northern Ugandans are REALLY worried about: nodding disease http://on.cnn.com/GAIWYq	137	326	Nodding disease

The most liked comment to the first post received fifteen “likes”, and it seems to be against the campaign as it is shown below:

WTF is up with the Kony bandwagon? No offense to y'all... but you watch one youtube vid, repost it, and then you forget all about him. This guy's been doing his thing for years and you think the Internet is gonna stop him? This isn't Egypt or Lybia or Syria. This is freakin Sub-Saharan Africa (CNNI 1-5, March 9 at 5:42pm).

Consequently, and as it is shown in the graph (Figure 10), there is a strong disagreement among the public after the first post. About 45% of the content favoured the campaign, whereas 55% of the content opposed it.

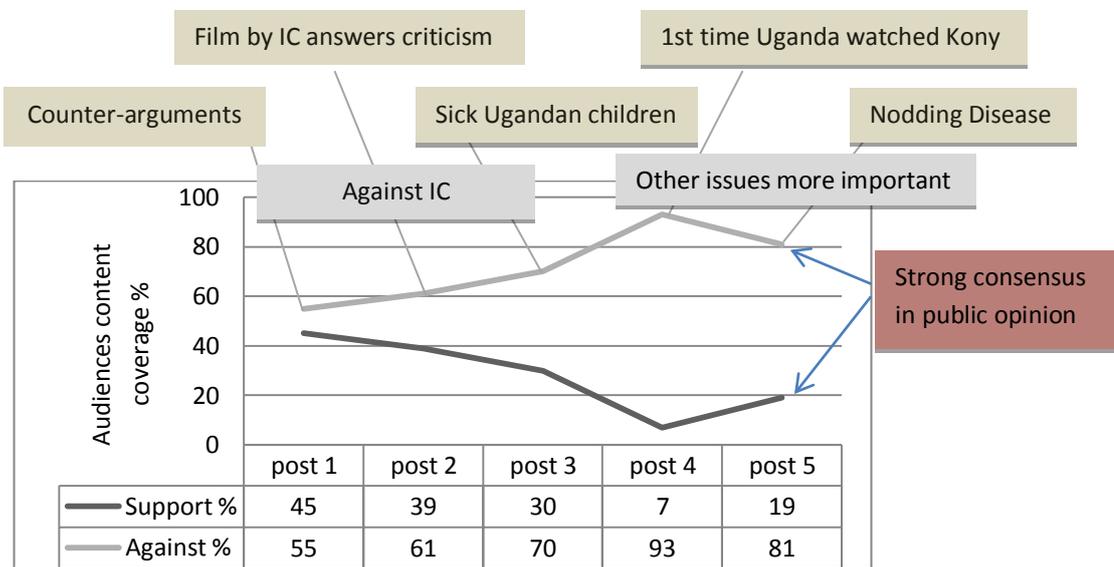


Figure 10. Development of public opinion on CNNI page on Facebook.

The statistical evidence suggested (see Table 5) that 29% of the oppositional attitudes focused on opposing the campaign, as is highlighted in the first column.

Table 5

Statistical Analysis of the Reasons Provided in Opposition to the Kony 2012 Campaign

Reasons of oppositions	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3	Post 4	Post 5
US is after Ugandan oil & other natural sources	7.25	6.8	18.1	11.47	4.6
Kony 2012 campaign is Propaganda	2	5.2	3.2	3.5	6
Against the US military intervention	16.8	8.5	1	7.4	3.3
Against IC and its video	29	35.9	35.9	0.88	10.6
Criticise how donation spent	7.5	0.33	5.5	5.4	-
Against video's director	7.5	-	-	-	-
Other issues more important than campaign	9.9	31.1	26.9	52	74
Internal US issues should be a priority	0.4	11.4	5.4	2.5	1.3
Information provided outdated/ misleading	6.40	0.98	3.76	16.5	-

4.2.2.2 CNNI second post.

Figure 10 shows that there was a slight increase (from 55% to 61%) in opposition to the Kony 2012 campaign between the first and second posts. The second post for CNNI reported about another film from the IC organization that answered the criticism. CNNI used “non-profit” to describe the campaign (see Table 4). The first response disapproved the “non-profitability” of the campaign, “non profit? You kidding me?” (CNNI 2-21, March 12 at 10:09pm).

CNNI asked audiences for their opinions on the campaign’s practices, but only 11 out of the first 50 comments answered the question directly as in the following example:

This group seems not to understand the issue of the conflict in North Uganda. The igroup has over magnified an issue that is almost closed. Its just too alarming for no reason (CNNI 2-23, March 12 at 10:10pm).

One of the participants criticized the way that the CNNI framed its post, and criticised the lack of African opinions in the film:

CNN failed to ask the hard questions about how the campaign is further militarising the conflict and playing into the hands of a militaristic government in Uganda. They also failed to challenge the filmmaker on the lack of African voices and opinions in the movie (CNNI 2-27, March 12 at 10:13pm).

The attached link is a video by CNN entitled “Group behind anti-Kony video rebuts criticism, urges public pressure” where the Invisible Children CEO and Kony 2012 filmmaker appeared in a show on CNN, answering the criticisms of survivors and the Ugandan public opinion. They also justified the bad timing of showing the film that was supposed to be screened six years earlier.

The statistics for the opposition to the second posts (see Table 5) suggested that about 35% of the opposing content focused on the IC campaign, and 31% believed that other issues were more important than the Kony 2012 campaign. Some of the issues that participants were concerned with at that point in time were poor children, Gaza, bombing in Israel, and Canadian oil sands. Some participants’ comments were perceived negatively by other participants as in the following comments:

C'mon Africa dont fear the US/UN, we are coming to help and u need us. Dont be scared brown ppl of the world, our love bombs are getting ready to drop. Just look at Angelina and Brad's children, look at our Prez, its a new day. We are the heros of the whole world (sarcasm) (CNNI 2-37, March 12 at 10:20pm).

The comment appeared to be by an American participant. It used words and phrases such as “don’t fear the US/UN, we are coming to help”, “ourPrez”, “We are the heroes”, and “u need us”. These phrases seemed to provoke the anger of those who seemed to be from Africa. Twenty five comments defending Africa followed the above comment, and nine of them explicitly revealed that they were from Africa:

you’re a stupid American...we Africans fear no body, we fear God only (CNNIparticipant 2-38, March 12 at 10:24pm).

Some participants adopted neutral attitudes to defend what they believed in, so as not to let what they think be seen as racist discourse thereby diverting attention from the campaign. The following two examples noted this:

C'mon peoples this KTny 2012 is not about back and white!Kony is a blackman and the victims are black (CNNI 2-45, March 12 at 11:28pm).

Africans, this is an organization, not our government. Americans didn't know about kony, nor many of the things that trouble your hearts so much. But as we find out, we want to help. And Americans are not just "whites": don't treat us like this like it's our nation getting involved in African issues politically. This is an international organization calling the world together for a greater good (CNNI 2-48, March 12 at 11:47pm).

However, these comments are in favour of the campaign, and they are from American participants as it is shown in “not our government” and “we want to help”. The pronoun “we” again is extensively used by the participants on the CNNI page and not exclusively the ABC News.

4.2.2.3 CNNI third post.

Figure 11 shows that the focus of CNNI coverage in the third post turned to a disease called the “nodding disease”, which is believed to have caused the death of Ugandan children. In the third post, an article describing the disease is attached.



Figure 11. The third Kony 2012 related post on CNNI page on Facebook.

Interestingly, the percentage of the opposing opinions to the campaign rose by 9% from 61% to 70% (see Figure 10). The attached article criticised why the campaign did not cover the disease in the Kony 2012 video. Both emotional and responsibility frames were employed in the post through the use of phrases such as “more children dies” and “where is the slick viral videos for them”.

On the other hand, TMS Rug, a Ugandan activist and the writer of the attached article appreciated the role played by the campaign:

this campaign has the makings of what could have been a truly transformational development communication experiment.

However, few participants mentioned the topic covered by the post. Only four out of the first fifty comments discussed the coverage of disease. Other reasons were given to continue opposing the campaign; for example, the first comment suggested that the US was after the oil in Uganda:

UGANDA starting to produce OIL?hmmp US cares 4 your oil!(CNNI 3-1, March 13 at 3:26am).

The IC organization practises, and the belief that other issues deserved more attention than the Kony 2012 campaign, were the main concerns that participants showed to oppose the campaign in the following comment (for statistical details see Table 4.45):

Instead of KONY2012; FOOD2012 OR MEDICINE2012 OR EDUCATION 2012 IS BETTER (CNNI 3-31, March 13 at 3:37am).

Comparing comments of this particular post with those of the third post, only one comment seemed to be against Africans or black people:

I'm beginning to see that it is very hard to help black people. And especially ones that can't or won't help themselves. I can't even believe they even took that attitude and when no one helps you still complain. When it's you who need to do better yourselves.Jeez (CNNI 3-41, March 13 at 3:42am).

4.2.2.4 CNNI fourth post.

At this point, opposition to the campaign among CNNI participants reached its highest point compared to the other posts, which meant that the consensus level among public opinion was the highest. It is clear from the graph (Figure 10) that there was a sharp increase between the third and fourth posts, with an increase of 33% from 70% to 93%. The post shown in Figure 12 covered the screening of the Kony 2012 video in Lira (North of Uganda).



Figure 12. The fourth Kony 2012 related post on CNNI Facebook page.

The attached video entitled “Villagers in Uganda watch ‘Kony 2012’” is one minute and 48 seconds long. Table 6 summarizes the content of the video, sources used, and time devoted to each part.

Table 6. Analysis of the video entitled “Villagers in Uganda watch “Kony 2012”

Content of video	Sources	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tens of millions watched Kony 2012 video around the world, excluding Lira (north of Uganda) • Projecting film on a white sheet • Fewer than 2% of the Ugandans have access to the internet 	-	22 sec.
The Kony film should not focus on Kony, but on his victims. People demand to be part of the debate.	Victor Ocheing (African Youth initiative network)	30 sec.
Several thousand of Ugandans came to watch the Kony 2012 film: Ugandans expected to see how their land was destroyed, and how people were killed by Kony.	local school teacher, Nixon Ewa	46 sec.

The word “villagers” seems to catch the attention of some participants. The first response to this post states, “I hear villagers!!!” (CNNI 4-1, March 14 at 9:35pm).

Approximately, the first nine out of the ten comments seemed to be from Africans, who denied what the video reported as in the following example:

That’s false..we have ever watched it...stop that (CNNI 4-3, March 14 at 9:36pm).

The word “villagers” was perceived negatively by the participants as was reflected in the following two comments:

How about European villagers? I guess they've never heard about Kony either!!!! (CNNI 4-6, March 14 at 9:37pm).

CNN, remember Ugandans don't live on food stamps like the western world. Please talk about positive things too. You always talk about negative things about our country. I have seen many investors from the western world enjoying our country not Kony unless u want to make money using Kony story!! We are very tired of yr negative cheap talks (CNNI 4-39, March 14 at 9:42pm).

The participants were not only against the Kony 2012 campaign, but also against CNNI which was perceived as a manipulating news network as seen in 71% of the comments:

That's nt true CNN. That hypothesis you're using is nt comprehensive (CNNI 4-4, March 14 at 9:36pm).

About 38% of the participants started their comments with “CNN” to indicate that their comments were directed to CNNI. They used CNN not CNNI which might imply that CNN and CNNI were viewed as the same. Thirty nine out of fifty comments that opposed the campaign seemed to originate from Uganda and other African countries.

The following table (Table 7) outlines the main indicators that were concluded from the comments which defined the identity of the participants from the given text (audiences' comments in this case).

Table 7. Indicators used to identify the identity of the participants in the responses to the fourth post of the CNNI

Indicators of identity	Examples of comments
National identity	"we are <u>ugandans</u> and have seen this before plus we dont need 2 shout or paint ourselves marks showing we've watched it" (CNNI16, March 14 at 9:46pm)
"we"	"people of Cnn its none of business wheather we watched or not . We dontwana remember those sufferings that we passed thru,i think there is sme hidden agendas!"(CNNI17, March 14 at 10:03pm).
"Our"	"You are looking for platfroms to come and steal <u>our</u> oil! Kony is not the main point here"(CNNI18, March 14 at 10:06pm)
"us"	"America canot continue 2 fool <u>us</u> ..a hidden agenda is attached 2 these whole thing"(CNNI19, March 14 at 9:44pm)
Geographical-defined	"... we saw that here in <u>zimbabwe</u> things where made worse by the media. come and see how beautiful this continent is before you start assuming that we are the worst and always in need" (CNNI20, March 14 at 10:08pm)
Patriotism	"am <u>proud am black..truely african</u>cnn, i think they shldknw that africa as a continent is the greatest...europe and america will one day fall.like other kingdoms did,persians,rome,greeks...and africa will rise"(CNNI21 , March 14 at 9:51pm)

While these comments were selected because the characteristics of participant were made explicit, the researcher subsequently found that all of them were against the campaign.

4.2.2.5 CNNI fifth post.

After the fourth post, the opposition percentage declined steadily and continued to decline after posting of the fifth post (see Figure 13). There was about a 12% shift in favour of the IC campaign, but the opposition remained high with 81% of the content

being against the campaign. The focus of the final post was on the “nodding disease” (see Figure 13), that has no known origin or cure (Edwards, 2012).



Figure 13. A picture of an infected nodding disease child attached to the fifth post of the CNNI.

More than 3,000 Ugandans children aged between five and 15 years are affected by the disease. This disease has killed about 200 children in the past three years. The infected children nod their heads when they see food or when they feel cold. Some children with nodding disease appear normal, but they have continuous seizure activity (WHO, 2012).

The demonstrative pronoun “this” was used to describe the picture of the child. The linked article is written by McKenzie, a Kenya based correspondent for CNNI. The article covered current stories of sick children, disease symptoms and World Health Organization’s (WHO) efforts.

According to the attached article, “And all this is in a region where many families suffered for decades from the brutality of the Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, which abducted thousands of children and pushed civilians into mass camps”. Approximately, 74% of the audiences who showed their sympathy towards children were against the campaign because they believed that the health of those children was more important than the Kony 2012 campaign. Four out of fifty comments to this post did not discuss the disease topic as in the following comment:

if the we didn't buy into this stupid propaganda, the United States wouldn't have an excuse to be there and all.. then make up a fake circumstance in which they will have to fight.. and it will be Afganistan, Syria, Lybiaetc all over again (CNNI 5-1, March 20 at 11:04pm).

An anti-American attitude is expressed only in three comments, and the position that most of the participants took from the CNNI changed compared to the previous CNNI's post (see 4.2.2.4).

All credit to CNN, for informing the world, kony is not in Guluany more. Its nodding disease that is affecting them (CNNI 5-10, March 20 at 11:28pm).

Despite the strong opposition that audiences of the CNNI showed toward the campaign, and toward the channel, they changed their minds when the campaign discussed “nodding disease” with a picture of an infected child. In brief, the first, second, and third posts of CNNI provided counter-frames, while the emotional frame was employed twice when talking about the nodding disease. The number of “likes” to the CNNI posts decreased gradually from the first to the fifth post except for the second post which received the least numbers of likes and which is titled “Confronting Critics” (see Figure 14).

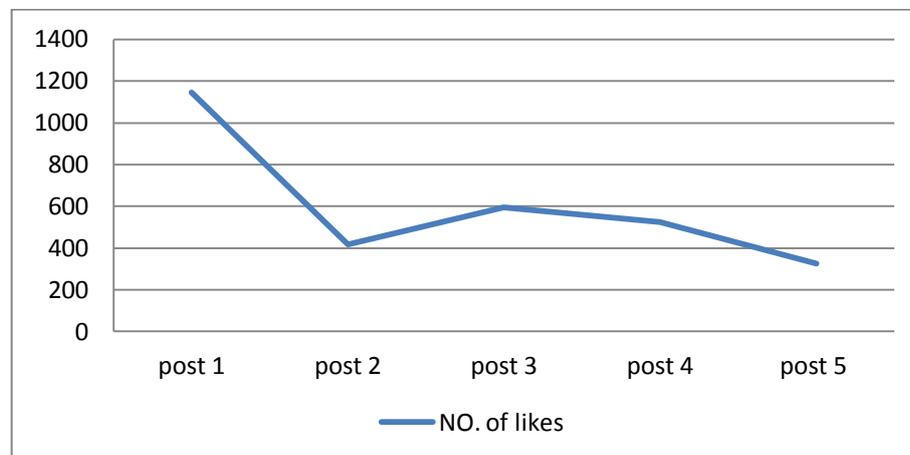


Figure 14. Number of likes to CNNI post of the Kony 2012 campaign.

4.2.3 Al-Jazeera English (AJE).

Al-Jazeera English was four days behind in posting news regarding the Kony 2012 campaign on its social media platforms. It started posting on March 12, 2012, while ABC News posted its first news on March 8, 2012 and covered the issue on television one day previously as mentioned earlier.

Participants adopted a high fluctuation in opinions towards the campaign on AJE’s page (see Figure 15). Overall, it can be seen that the opposition was not less than 60% of the content generated by the participants.

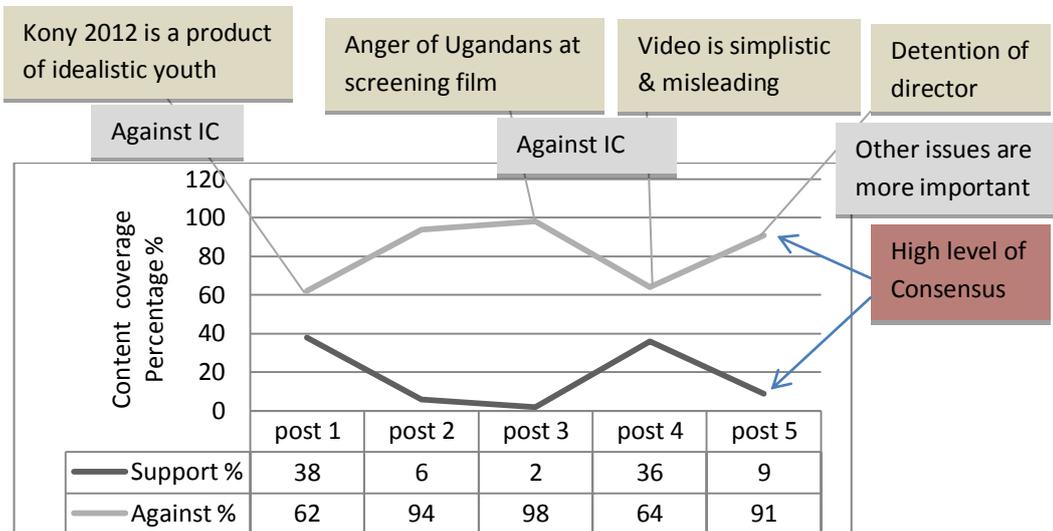


Figure 15. Development of public opinion on AJE’s page on Facebook.

4.2.3.1 AJE first post.

The first post was a quote from an article on Al-Jazeera English website by Kendzior, an anthropologist, who stated, "Kony 2012 was the product of idealistic youth trying to make a chaotic conflict seem easy to control"(see Table 8).

AJE asked the participants if they agreed or not with the last quote. The anthropologist judged the campaign as propaganda. No comment that responded to this particular post mentioned the word "propaganda" explicitly, but alternative words and phrases like "secret goals", "bandwagon", "brainwashing", "deception", "political gimmick", "hidden agendas", "spin doctoring", and "election stunt" were used.

The first comment to this particular post was against the campaign, and it received 14 likes, which was relatively low, compared to the most liked comments to the other post:

kony is a scam by the ameriKan government. in an attempt to militarize that part of the world, like they have done to the rest (AJE 1-1, March 12 at 8:02pm).

Table 8. Al-Jazeera English Kony 2012 campaign related posts on Facebook

Date	Cable News Network's post	Number of comments	Number of likes	Focus of Post
12/3/2011	1. Op-ed: "Kony2012 was the product of idealistic youth trying to make a chaotic conflict seem easy to control," writes anthropologist Sarah Kendzior. Do you agree? http://aje.me/wmxusc	69	132	Kony 2012 was a product of idealistic youth and attached article states it is propaganda
14/3/2012	2. Visit our Kony 2012 debate spotlight page for In-depth coverage: The Uganda Speaks project, analysis, photos, features and interviews: http://aje.me/yPTUZx	78	291	Encouraged audiences to visit SJE's In-depth coverage "Uganda Speaks project"
14/3/2012	3. For those of you on Twitter, have a look at our campaign with responses to #Kony2012 from Ugandans - we are trying to get the hashtag to trend right NOW http://aje.me/xL9j7n	72	312	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting #Kony2012 • Screening Kony 2012 provoked anger of Ugandans
15/3/2012	4. Opinion: Julie Owono analyses the "Kony 2012" video - and argues that it's simplistic and misleading. Do you agree with her? Read the article here: http://aje.me/wvWTzF	51	104	Kony 2012 video was simplistic and misleading according to the analysis
17/3/2012	5. Jason Russell narrated the Kony 2012 campaign video which went viral on the internet last week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional reading: Kony 2012' filmmaker detained" in San Diego 	78	137	Detention of Kony 2012 director

The content that reflected oppositional attitudes constituted 62% of the content. Only about 30% of this percentage opposed the IC organization. About 23% implied that the Kony 2012 video was American propaganda (see Table 9). Finally, twenty out of fifty participants answered the question posted by the AJE directly at the beginning of their comments as in the following example:

It is not easy to control, in fact, even if it is impossible, doesn't mean people shouldn't try and CARE(AJE 1-7, March 12 at 8:06pm).

Table 9

Statistical Analysis of the Reasons Provided in Opposition to the Kony 2012 Campaign on the AJE Page

Reasons for opposition	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3	Post 4	Post 5
US is after Ugandan oil & other natural sources	4.7	7.3	14.1	14.4	8.3
Kony 2012 campaign is Propaganda	22.9	7	9.4	0.5	-
Against the US military intervention	8.5	31.7	20.2	18.7	9.3
Against IC and its video	30.7	22.5	20.5	38.9	18.7
Criticise how donation spent	8.3	1.5	6.4	16.2	3.7
Against video's director	5.7	-	-	-	23.6
Other issues more important than campaign	12.7	17	12.5	7.9	30.1
Internal US issues should be priority	-	5.96	1.77	-	-
Information provided outdated/ misleading	6	6.6	15.6	2.8	6.0

4.2.3.2 AJE second post.

The graph (see Figure 15) shows that there was a sharp increase in the oppositional content for the second post from 62% to 94%. In the second post, AJE promoted its project "Uganda Speaks". This project was expected to provide an in-depth coverage and balanced reporting of the IC campaign by presenting the Ugandan counter-arguments. The AJE started its post by "Visit our Kony 2012 debate..." (see Figure 16).

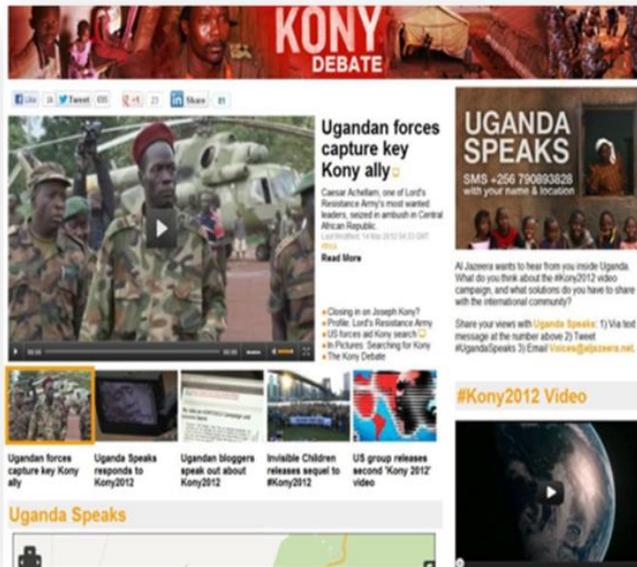


Figure 16. Snapshot of the AJE’s “Uganda Speaks” project website Interface.

The “Kony debate” is the title for the “Uganda speaks” project that was shown in the top banner of the website interface (Figure 16) and linked to the post. The following comment to this post received the highest number of “likes” (47 likes) among the 1,000 selected audiences’ comments to the posts of the four news networks:

Am Ugandan and we are surprised, kony terrorised Uganda for 20 years in the north cutting off people's lips, raping them but all that time the US never came out to hunt him down now he is gone there sending troops to Uganda to hunt him down yet he fled to central Africa.did they come because we discovered oil? Why come when the damage is already done.was he untouchable by then? We need answers (AJE 2-6, March 14 at 5:43pm).

The first catch phrase in this comment was “Am Ugandan”, so national identity is identified. The oppositional attitude was justified by criticising the US for not coming to “hunt him down”, when “Kony terrorised Uganda” (which reflects emotional attitude), but now the USA comes after oil discovery (economic consequence frame). The main justification for opposing the Kony 2012 campaign in the comments of this post was the opposition to the US military intervention in Uganda.

4.2.2.3 AJE third post.

Figure 15 shows that there was a slight increase in oppositional opinions to a peak of 98%. Most of these attitudes focused equally on the IC campaign and the American intervention in Uganda with both just over 20% (see Table 9).

This post targeted Twitter users on Facebook, “For those of you on Twitter...” This post had the largest number of “likes” with 312 likes, compared to the other posts of AJE regarding the Kony 2012 campaign (see Table 8). “#Kony2012” hashtag² was promoted to get responses from the Ugandans to cover the absence of the Ugandan voices in the video as the AJE claimed. The attached video was a report by the AJE entitled “Kony screening provokes anger in Uganda” about the screening of the Kony 2012 film by a charity to Ugandans who had suffered at the hands of the LRA. The aspects that the video covered are summarised in the table (Table 10). The linked video showed how the Ugandans were angry at the IC because the film “celebrates their suffering” as they claimed.

Table 10. Analysis of the video entitled “Kony screening provokes anger in Uganda”

Content of video	sources	Time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nobody watched the Kony 2012 video in Lira because they have “little internet access” Interviews with victims of Kony 	African Youth initiative network Victim of Kony, Victor Ocheing	1:39
Ugandans expected to watch a film that is portraying their suffering, not footages of American man and his son The video is simply puzzling	-	26 sec.
IC defends the film	Invisible Children, CEO	22sec.
Ugandans are angry	Three Ugandans citizens	23 sec.
Throwing rocks on the screening sheet	-	

²The “#” tag is a single word, or words connected together that communicate the tweet context (Reynolds, 2012), identify or classify messages and ideas, and promote specific topics or people (Hashtag, 2013). The tweets that do not have “#” symbol do not appear in the search for the hashtag (Hashtag, 2013).

New terms emerged at this point in the comments by participants “imperialistic”, “Neo-Imperialism”, “modern colonialism” as was shown in the following post:

trying to influence people to influence their country into sending a military presence into Africa IS neoimperialism (AJE 3-18, March 15 at 8:23am).

It is important to note that this event was also covered by the CNNI allowing for comparison in responses in the next chapter (see 4.2.2.4).

4.2.3.4 AJE fourth post.

In this post, the percentage of opposing opinions dropped quickly by 34% from 98% to 64% (see Figure 15). Of these comments, 38.9% focused on US military intervention (see Table 9). For the second time, AJE used quote from an article published on its website, and provided one side of the argument that described Kony video as “simplistic and misleading”. The AJE asked the audiences if they agreed with the selected quote entitled “Opinion” (Table 8). Ten out of fifty comments answered the AJE question directly like the following:

Simplistic? Maybe. But effective enough to go viral. Job well done! (AJE 4-25, March 15 at 4:56am).

Other participants interposed to support the efforts of the campaign, and those participants had an impact on opinion of others which led to the decrease of opposition as in the following example:

I have been following "Invisible Children" for 5 years now. These atrocities have been ignored for years and any awareness is positive. Let's stop ALL acts of genocide and crimes against humanity (AJE 4-40, March 15 at 5:40am).

Other comments to the AJE’s fourth post questioned why people criticised the campaign after it had reached a high level of success while the other comments focused on the duty to save children.

4.2.3.5 AJE fifth post.

Moving to the fifth selected post (Table 8), AJE covered the scandal of the Kony 2012 film director’s detention, which was mentioned previously when discussing ABC News posts (see 4.2.1.5). This incident story was attached to two posts under the subheading of “Kony 2012 filmmaker detained in San Diego”. The post received the highest number of comments regarding one of the human interest topics. The first comment

on this post opposed the campaign strongly using “never” twice to emphasise the position toward the campaign.

Never supported the whole "Kony 2012" movement, never will.This is pretty ironic (AJE 5-1, March 17 at 8:33pm).

Some participants who had not watched the video were motivated to watch it after this incident’s post:

Give me a link to watch za video of Kony 2012.i have not watch it by za way (AJE 5-5, March 17 at 8:36pm).

The shift in public opinion against the campaign rose significantly to 91% at this point (see Figure 15). The main reason for the opposition was the participants’ beliefs that there were other issues that were more important than the Kony 2012 campaign, which constituted 30% of the opposing content, followed by 23% criticising the film director (see Table 9). Responding to this post, the Anti-American sentiment was strong; “American double standards”, and “typical American”.

In brief, the AJE only presented one side of the argument in its coverage: its sources of quotes and the attributed sources used in the interviews. It was the only network where the number of “likes” to the AJE posts did not decrease over the time, but instead it increased dramatically from the first to the third post (see Figure 17). However, the number of likes has decreased at the point when the post said that the campaign was “simplistic and misleading”.

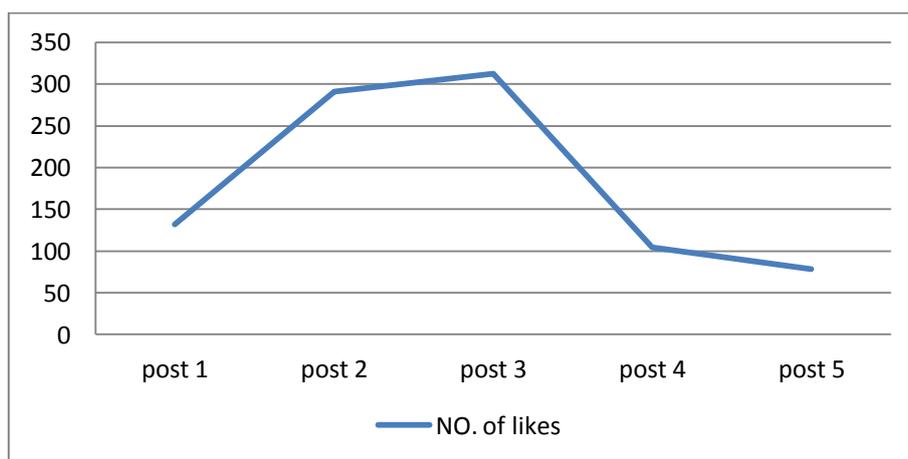


Figure 17. Number of likes to AJE’s post of the Kony 2012 campaign

4.2.4 BBC World News.

BBC World News posted once about the Kony 2012 campaign; however, its post had the highest number of comments of all the networks' posts, even when responses to all five posts were combined; therefore, it was deemed sufficient to draw the audiences' opinions from the comments. While five posts and 250 comments (50 comments for each post) were analysed from the other selected news networks' pages, only one post for BBC World News and its first 250 comments were analysed. As shown in Figure 18 in the next page, each of the 50 comments represented a new stage in the timeline (see Figure 18).

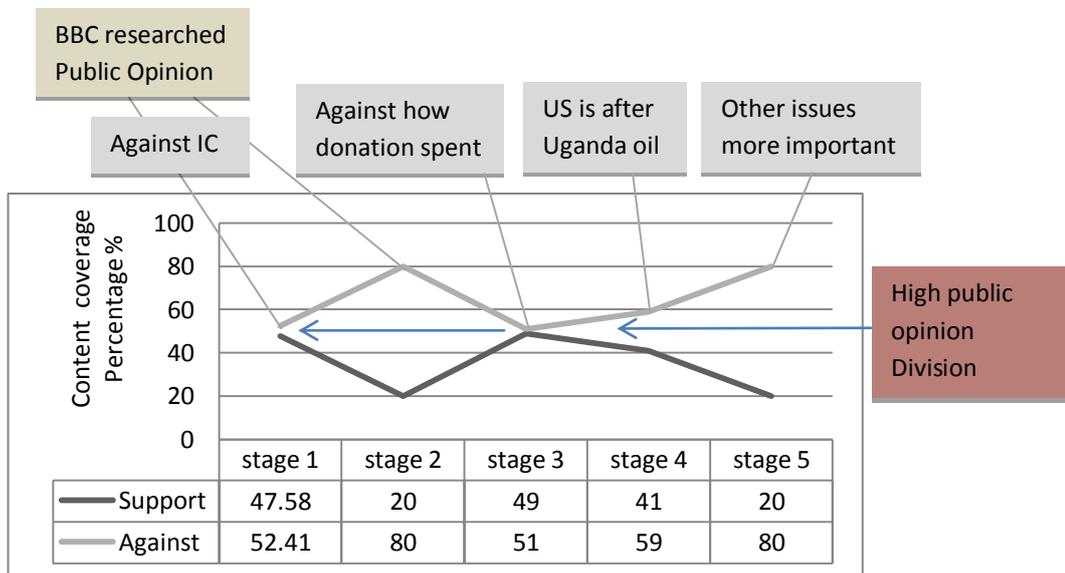


Figure 18. Development of public opinion on BBC World News Facebook page.

In its post, BBC World News asked for public opinion on the IC campaign as the responses would be discussed on the “World Have Your Say” (WHYS) conversational programme (see Table 11).

Table 11

BBC World News Kony 2012 Campaign Related Post on Facebook

Date	Cable News Network's post	Number of comments	Number of likes	Focus of Post
10/3/2012	1. On World Have Your Say at 1500GMT, we're talking about your reaction to the Kony 2012 campaign. Have you seen the video? What did you think of it? Has it changed what you think or do you find it patronising? Will it make a difference? Post your comments here, and don't forget to let us know where you are.	436	1147	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audiences' opinions• Reaction to Kony 2012 campaign

In the case of BBC, the influence of news framing will only be considered in the first stage, and the influence of the participants' comments on how the other participants view the campaign will be set as factors that influence how public opinion changed over time. The stages shown in the grey boxes represent the themes that the participants focused on in every 50 comments. This graph is different in that the influence of framing can be measured from the first 50 comments, and other stages were influenced by the interaction between the participants themselves. However, on the other news networks, the influence of framing was measured in five stages.

There is no photography, source attribution, or information provided to audiences in the BBC World News post. There was a division in the opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign from the first stage. Just over 52% of content opposed the Kony 2012 campaign, while just over 47.5% supported it. Criticism against the IC organization was the main reason why participants opposed the campaign. Just over 44% opposed it as shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Statistical Analysis of the Reasons Provided in Opposition to the Kony 2012 Campaign on the BBC World News page

Reasons for opposition	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3	Post 4	Post 5
US is after Ugandan oil & other natural sources	2.5	22	11.5	35.4	8.6
Kony 2012 campaign is Propaganda	3.7	5.2	0.93	6.7	23.5
Against the US military intervention	8.8	7.5	2.5	12.5	2
Against IC and its video	44.2	34	9.7	15	5.9
Criticise how donation spent	16.9	7.9	46	2.3	2.7
Against video's director	-	-	-	-	-
Other issues more important than campaign	8.49	14.4	10.6	13.3	44.4
Internal US issues should be priority	-	-	11.2	-	8.4
Information provided outdated/ misleading	15.4	8.8	7	14.4	4.2

In the second stage, oppositional opinions reached a peak of 80% (see Figure 18), with only 20% supporting the campaign. It can be seen that support and opposition to the Kony 2012 campaign at the third stage were almost equal (49%: 51%), which indicated that there was no consensus on the issue, and public opinion was significantly divided. Of those against the campaign, 46% criticized how the donation was spent by the organization as in the following example:

Guys I live in Uganda to I am Ugandan Kony has not been in Uganda for over 5 years now... there is no more night trekking in those districts although there is an out break of a wierd disease but certainly not by the hands of KONY... so what on earth is that Video all about? other than collecting \$30 for coins or what ever? (BBC 96, March 10 at 12:48am).

Between stage three and stage four, there was an increase of 8% in opposition with 59% of the opinions opposing the Kony 2012 campaign and the main cause of the opposition at this stage was the belief that the USA was after Ugandan oil. Nine references to the word “oil” were found. Public opinion shifted toward opposing the IC campaign at stage five with 80% in opposition. At this point, there appeared to be consensus in public opinion. Of those comments opposing the campaign, just over 44%

suggested that the other issues were more important than the Kony 2012 campaign (see Table 12). Their major concerns included corruption of the Ugandan government and genocide in Congo and Syria. The propaganda theme was most emphasised at this stage compared to the other stage, in 23.5% of the opposing comments. The following is a typical example:

It took me awhile to decide if I wanted to comment on this film. I was impressed by the slick marketing and scared to death of the cult like psychological tactics. To summarize my thoughts; this is a film targeting youth to wage war on a dirtbag that targets youth to wage war. So many statements in the film are so disturbing like "redefining propaganda". Alarms go off on so many levels. My gut is telling me that while Kony might be the focus of the film, I'm doubting if he is what this is really all about (BBC 203, March 11 at 3:02am).

Much can be gained from looking at how participants related their identities to the opinion that they adopted. How the participants on the BBC's Facebook page positioned themselves to the opinions they adopted was different from other news networks. Unlike the intensive use of the plural pronoun "we" and "our" on the ABC News page, the participants on the BBC World News expressed their opinions using the personal singular pronoun "I" and "my". In fact, 39% of the participants used "I think" at the beginning of their comments to express their opinions and others used "I believe", and "I felt".

The pronoun "I" was used 178 times in 250 comments, whereas "my" was used 28 times; for example, "my opinion", "my point of view", "my heart", and "my feeling". Only 45 out of 250 participants answered the BBC's question regarding defining the geographical area where they were from: Uganda (10), USA (6), Africa (8), Europe (7), Asia (7), Middle East (3), and others. Other participants separated their geographical identification from their national identity as following:

"From Uganda but currently in South Sudan" (BBC 61, March 10 at 12:12am).

"NEPAL, NOW SOUTH KOREA" (BBC 104, March 10 at 1:02am).

"Japan but I am from Afghanistan" (BBC 28, March 9 at 11:52pm).

"Guys I live in Uganda to I am Ugandan" (BBC 96, March 10 at 12:48am).

Their identification with the national identity was different from the geographical one. In term of public opinion, this separation might be as mere answers to the BBC

question, but the participants would answer the question from the BBC revealing information regarding their geographical location in response to “don’t forget to let us know where you are”. After participants identified themselves and the social groups they belonged to, it was imperative to look at how participants in this global context evaluated others. Other individuals constitute a social environment in which the perception of news impacts the formation of public opinion.

4.3 Other variables that affect public of the Kony 2012 campaign

4.3.1 Individuals’ evaluation of their social environment.

The distinction of opinions between participants who belonged to different social networks was clear. The groups seemed to exist on the AJE and CNNI pages were less homogenous than those on the ABC News and BBC World News pages, as is shown in Table 13. The table shows the frequency and percentage of the comments that appeared to be against Westerners (Americans), and the content that seemed to originate from Westerners against Africans.

Table 13

Frequency and Percentage of Opposing Groups

News networks	Against Westerners		Against Africans	
	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
CNN International	20	8.03%	4	1.50%
Al-Jazeera English	26	8.24%	1	0.32%
BBC World News	8	1.73%	0	0
ABC NEWS	1	0.39%	1	0.10%
Total	55	18.39%	6	1.92%

In this context, the participants kept others out “out of Africa or Uganda” and “out of America” to identify themselves. Some of these comments appeared to be racist or stereotypical as in the following example:

CNN, why ain't u guys telling informing us about the homeless people in NewYork and Washington? The time Kony was killing people in Uganda u never used to inform the world , what a world???????????? (CNNI 4-14, March 14 at 9:44pm)·

Interestingly, this discourse was higher from Africans against Americans/Westerners as in “Americans need some healing” and “Americans are easily brainwashed”, and the same comments below were also against the campaign.

Americans need some healing.....why has it taken em 26yrs to realise ugandans in the north need help....we know why they want to come to our country.....oil (AJE 4-11, March 15 at 4:16am)

The comments that were against Americans seemed to be from Africans. For example, the above comment implied that the participant was from Uganda. He/ she expressed what he/she felt toward Americans, and then ended the comment with “we know why they want to come to our country.” From analysing how participants identified themselves and their relationships with the groups that they do/do not belong to, it has been found that the social environment influenced the formation of opinion. The public opinion formed within/under these social conditions was not represented in written comments, but also via likes that certain comments received as we will see in the following section.

4.3.2 “Likes” as a form of opinion expression.

The number of likes clicked on news networks’ posts was more than the number of actual written responses to the news networks’ (see Tables 2, 4, 8 & 11). It seemed that public preferred to click the “like” button rather than write a comment. But looking at the relationships between the participants on selected news networks, and the number of “likes” that particular participants received from their online peers, made it worthy to examine why the public click “like”, and what characteristics of these comments might motivate other participants to click “like”. In order to answer this question the five most liked comments from each network were selected and analysed according to the number of likes, opinion of the campaign, frame or meanings employed, and disclosure of identity (see Table 14 next page) (see appendix A for the comments).

Table 14

Twenty Most “liked” Audiences’ Comments on the Selected News Networks’ Pages

	Likes	Network	Opinion	Frames	Disclosed identity
1	43	AJE	Against	Emotional, economic-consequences & responsibility	“am Ugandan”
2	31	AJE	Against	Economic- consequences	-
3	27	AJE	Against	Economic-consequences, emotional & responsibility	“we are”
4	27	AJE	Against	Responsibility	-
5	22	ABC	Against	Economic-consequences	“our own country”
6	20	ABC	Against	Responsibility, conflict	“OUR country”
7	19	AJE	Against	Responsibility, economic-consequences, emotional	-
8	19	ABC	Support	Emotional	“As Americans we..”
9	17	ABC	Support	Emotional	“We..had issue's at home during .. Holocaust”
10	17	ABC	Support	Emotional	-
11	15	CNNI	Against	Responsibility	-
12	11	CNNI	Against	Responsibility	“We are proud of our country”
13	10	BBC	Support	Emotional	-

14	9	BBC	Against	Responsibility & economic	-
15	9	CNNI	Support	Emotional	-
16	9	CNNI	Support	Emotional & moral judgment	-
17	8	CNNI	Against	Responsibility & moral judgment	“our country”
18	8	BBC	Support	Emotional	“Texas, Wisconsin”, “Im white, I’m a mother”
19	7	BBC	Against	Responsibility, emotional & conflict	“For God and my country UGANDA” & “Am Ugandan”
20	7	BBC	Against	Economic-consequences	“I live in Uganda”

Apparently, the most liked comments were from the AJE and ABC News. Not all the most liked comments were informative. The top seven liked comments on all news networks pages were against the campaign. Of these comments, five focused on the economic consequences of opposing the campaign, as in the comments that linked the refusal of American intervention in Uganda with the oil discovery in the country. Moreover, responsibility framing was used in opposing most of the liked comments. For instance, some comments accused the USA of what had happened in Uganda because the US had not helped Uganda to hunt Kony when he was active. Also, the fourth most liked comment accused Clinton (USA) of the death of 500,000 Iraqi children as a result of the UN sanctions on Iraq.

The emotional frame was used in half of the most liked comments which used words like “humanity”, “change”, “better”, “difference”, “empathy”, “heartless”, “blessed”, “crying”, “tortured”, “raped”, and “children”. Supporters of the campaign did not reveal their identities although 11 participants expressed some characteristics of their identities. Lastly, proximity to the event or issue that might be relevant to the formation of public opinion was noted because six out of the 14 opposing comments were from Uganda (see Table 14). These comments have been liked without asking others to read the content of the comment or to press “like” button.

However, there were other types of comments that used certain words to inform other participants of the issues related to the campaign. These comments used words and phrases such as “wake up people”, “educate yourself”, “read”, “search”,

“look at”, and “check”. These words were used in the comments that provided negative information about the campaign as in the following example:

wake up people. it's a SCAM. not only does ONLY 30% of what's donated goes to actually help (the rest is pocketed) BUT Uganda has massive amounts of oil and other mineral reserves. do you REALLY think the U.S is going to leave them alone? (ABC 4-7, March 10 at 11:44am).

The above comment received sixteen “likes”. It was interesting to note that the comments that used “wake up” received more likes than comments that used “read” or “check”. On AJE and CNNI, the words that used to inform people or alert them were used in the comments against the campaign.

In addition, “wake up” was used twice by the participants on the BBC World News in comments that were addressed to the UN, rather than to the other participants. However, the use of “wake up” was a source of annoyance to some participants as in the following example:

I have a hard time taking were always against campaign on all news networks, but on ABC New page where these used more, the situation is different with three comments used read was supporting the comments. seriously anyone who uses "*wake up people*" in a discussion (ABC 4-23, March 15 at 4:45am).

One could argue that the comments that used economic consequences, responsibility, and emotional frames received the most number of “likes”. It was apparent that there were different motivations for clicking “like” button. The most liked comments did not disclose the identities of participant. Moreover, the comments that seemed to originate from Uganda and Africa were among the most liked comments list, which is worthy to discuss in the following chapter. It seems that proximity to the event is important. The use of alerting words to inform people was obvious in the comments that opposed the campaign, where participants assumed that their online peers do not know anything about the related issues, so they asked them to read, check the existing argument, be aware and search for new information.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the detailed quantitative and qualitative findings that emerged from intertextual and content analysis. The key findings were that the subjective coverage of media had an impact on public perception of issue and public opinion. However, the public sources of references; which were shown in the identity

disclosure, membership of groups, and separating the self from others; can affect the perception of media content, and consequently public opinion formation. Disclosure of identity was represented in the use of pronouns or the high sense of patriotism. It proved to minimise or strengthen framing, and consequently public opinion. There were various motivations that might influence people to click “like” or follow others’ comments. The next chapter will summarise the main patterns of media framing and public impact on public opinion formation, which will be discussed in relation to the theories and models outlined in Chapter two.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

As more than one factor proved to influence public opinion formation and expression on cable news networks' pages on Facebook, it is predictable to bring the concluded results together and classify them into two main directions: the influence of cable news networks' framing on public opinion, and the influence of public's social networks on perception of news and consequently on public opinion. It might be imperative to take into account other factors than those reviewed in Chapter two, namely, underlying ideologies, and strength of social ties, individual threshold, individual characteristics, and perception of agreement or climate of the overall opinion. The chapter will be ended with finding out possible reasons of why Facebook users are motivated to enter "like" for certain comments rather than others and what this means in terms of public opinion formation and expression.

5.2 Overview of the Theoretical Framework

In the literature review and findings of research, a strong relationship has been reported between media framing and public opinion, and between individuals' social networks, which work as a frame of reference, and public opinion. How participants viewed the Kony 2012 campaign was measured in ways other than analysing the news framing on Facebook. Public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign was also examined using CDA as a framework in addition to a combination of Intertextuality and content analysis components to detect and provide empirical insights into how the public responded.

The current study found that the influence of news framing in diminishing participants' recall to promote certain interpretations and evaluation (Valkenburg et al., 1999; Hallahan, 1999; Entman, 2004; Boyle et al., 2006) was overrated. For instance, the analysis of the third post of CNNI (see 4.2.2.3) showed that participants may not check the attached links that were included the news content. The participants were observing other factors such as visual images. The picture from the Kony campaign that was attached to the third post would be a possible explanation in the high opposition to comments relating to the nodding disease.

Furthermore, this thesis set out with the aim of assessing the influence of the public and their social environment (human social networks) on news networks, news perception and consequently public opinion. The results showed that public/participants' influence on cable news networks was evident. For instance, after the negative perception of reporting the screening of the Kony 2012 film in Uganda, 71% of the participants criticised CNNI (see 4.2.2.4). This event explained the subsequent coverage of the nodding disease for the second time (see 4.2.2.5), and the absence of reporting the detention of the director of the Kony 2012 film. It has been noticed that the participants who appeared to be from Africa liked those who disclosed their identities in Table 7 and who were against the campaign. This showed how the social networks can affect the opinions that individuals adopt. For example, about 70% of the oppositional content which appeared to originate from Americans on the ABC News page focused on the internal issues as a priority for the American government. This reminds us of the significance of the social environment such as is addressed in the Spiral of Silence theory of Noelle-Neumann (1974). However, one could argue that in the context of cable news networks on Facebook, people belong to different social networks, so they cannot evaluate things from the same perspective as discussed by Krassa (1988).

Finally, clicking "like" on particular comments can be explained by the employment of certain frames. As we have seen in Chapter four (section 4.3.2) emotional, economic consequences, and responsibility frames were used in the most liked participants' comments, but one can wonder if that is sufficient to motivate people to press "like". Clicking "likes" as a way to express an opinion might be connected to how individuals perceived the agreement which had previously been called in the Broom's Co-orientational Measurement model (1978) as "Congruency". Congruency is the extent to which one side perceives the agreement or disagreement with the other side on an issue (Broom, 1978). To answer the research questions that were set out in the Introduction (see 1.1) and Methodology chapters (see 3.2), it might be worthy to extend the answers and discuss them in detail.

5.3 Influence of Cable News Networks on Public Opinion of the Kony 2012 Campaign

As was discussed in Chapter two, Noelle-Neumann (1974) argued that individuals depend on subjective media as a source from which to create their own perception of the issue and its relevant events. It might not be about the subjective media selection by participants themselves. What media present can be seen as opinion of the majority; therefore, making individuals reject their own opinions as discussed by Taylor (1982) in the Pluralist Ignorance theory (see 2.5). This theory confirmed that this estimation can be mistaken (see section 2.5), which posits that the majority would inaccurately perceive that others hold certain opinions, and they will uphold those, while discarding their own opinions.

The framing effect, which increasingly stimulates the interest of scholars (Schulz & Roessler, 2012), proved valid in the online public sphere. The public themselves cannot select certain pieces of information without framing. The analysis of the posts where framing was detected reinforced Entman's definition of framing, which is worthy to look at in order to discuss how news framing influenced the public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

It is logical to start by giving an example of how similar events were framed by news networks, then reviewing the key patterns of framing in all news networks, and providing a possible explanation of the results.

5.3.1 Framing similar events differently.

The findings showed that the same events were framed differently, and thus caused different consequences. This is particularly evident in the AJE and CNNI coverage of the screening of the Kony 2012 video. The event was complicated and happened to be open to different interpretations. The American and the Middle Eastern originating networks targeted audiences that possibly had different frames of references.

The CNNI and the AJE reported the first time screening of the Kony 2012 video to the Ugandans on March 14, 2012. The highest percentage of opposition to the Kony 2012 campaign and consequently the highest level of consensus in public opinion

resulted from comments of coverage of this event (the AJE with 98 % and the CNNI with 93% of views in opposition). It seemed that framing of this event attracted attention of certain types of participants.

It is imperative to consider the magnitude of coverage, which is defined by Entman (2004) as aspects of framing where the elements that depict reality favour one sides' position (which is also made salient) while at the same time, shrink the elements that might construct the counter frame. As seen in the previous chapter, the AJE, unlike the CNNI, covered the anger of Ugandans at the film screening, and depicted incidents including rocks being thrown on the screening sheet, and the Ugandans' disappointment at the film that showed footage of the director and his son. On the other hand, CNNI only highlighted the Ugandans' demand to be part of the debate.

Looking at how much material was available, and how this was displayed, assists the evaluation of media framing. On AJE's page, the video was attached to another post, and there was no indicator that the attached link was covering the anger of Ugandans as a result of screening the Kony film in Uganda. But on the CNNI page, there was a post about this incident with the linked video depicting the screening of Kony 2012 to villagers in Uganda.

Moreover, it is important to look at how words were used to constitute this event. The framing of the AJE was saturated with morally judgmental words. AJE highlighted the conflict between the IC and Ugandans who believed that the campaign commercialised their suffering. The Kony 2012 film was described by the AJE's correspondent as "puzzling", and it "doesn't resonate with many of the people it claims it meant to help". On the other hand, CNNI did not report that the Ugandans were angry at the screening of the film.

Similar content was covered by the AJE and the CNNI but with different expressions (as listed in Table 15). The selection of words stimulated different responses among respondents to the two posts.

Table 15

Comparison of Selection of Words in Posted News of AJE and CNNI Regarding Screening of the Kony 2012 Video in Uganda for the First Time

Aspects of Comparison	Al-Jazeera English (AJE)	CNN International (CNNI)
Did Ugandans watch Kony 2012?	<u>Nobody</u> watched Kony 2012 video in Lira	<u>Millions watched</u> video around the world <u>but not in Lira</u>
Internet access in Uganda	have " <u>little</u> internet access"	<u>Less than 2%</u> have internet access
Expectations of Ugandans	Ugandans expected to watch a film that is portraying their <u>suffering</u> , not footage of American man and his son	Ugandans expected to see how their land was <u>destroyed</u> , and how people were <u>killed</u> by Kony

One could see that the selection of words affected how negatively the participants perceived and evaluated the news regarding the film screening, which contributed to increasing the percentage of opposition on both Facebook pages (AJE and CNNI). The participants on the AJE page were against the campaign only, while on the CNNI page, the participants opposed the campaign, the US, and CNNI. The majority of the audiences who commented on these posts on AJE and CNNI appeared to be from Africa as was implied by using particular pronouns, national identities, and other affiliations.

From Table 15, "nobody watched Kony video in Lira" of AJE vs. "Millions watched video... but not in Lira" of CNNI, "little" of AJE that described the condition of the internet vs. "less than 2%" of CNNI, "suffering" of AJE vs. "destroyed and killed" of CNNI, one could conclude that they mean the same thing to the average reader/listener.

The coverage of CNNI was perceived negatively as Africa seemed disconnected from the world and interpreted by participants as having stereotypical periphrasis. About 71% of the participants criticised CNNI as a result of its coverage, but no comment was made against AJE as in the following example:

This is utterly shocking: The way CNN paints Africa, Do you mean to say that not a single Ugandan has access to the internet?????? SHAME ON YOU CNN (CNNI 4-24, March 14 at 9:49pm).

The CNNI's post includes the word "villager" which contributed to the complicated misconception of the word "villagers". The following comment was the first word respond to the post:

I hear villagers!!! (CNNI 4-1, March 14 at 9:35pm).

The word "villagers" means "An inhabitant of a village" (Villagers, 2012), but as an adjective in East Africa according to Collins Dictionary, it connotes "backward, unsophisticated, or illiterate" (2012).

Furthermore, in the beginning of the video report, both networks interviewed the same person, an employer from the African youth initiative network. On the CNNI page, the interviewee emphasized the need for Ugandans to be part of the debate while on the AJE page, he argued the absence of the victims' part in the film which took about half of the video report. The second source that CNNI used was a local school teacher who questioned the reason why the film did not portray the atrocities of Joseph Kony in Uganda. AJE included the voices of five other sources (a victim of Joseph Kony, the CEO of Invisible Children, and three angry Ugandan citizens). However, the two minute and 40 seconds video report by AJE only dedicated 22 seconds for the CEO of the Invisible Children who stated the intention of the campaign, and confronted the attitude that people on the African streets had toward the campaign. Accordingly, one could see that there was attribution bias from the AJE coverage. White (1996) views the attribution as one of the obvious features of journalistic discourse where journalists or reporters keep themselves removed from evaluation by attributing the news to external sources. The attribution bias can be defined as "bias that derived from the sources used in the news story" (Ferguson, 2000, p. 65). What can be concluded at this stage is the origin of news network and pre-orientation of the audiences toward specific news network which may play a role in how the audiences perceive news, and whether they agree with framed news or not. This finding is consistent with the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) which assumes that audiences are not passive consumers of media content, but rather they actively seek specific media outlets to satisfy specific needs like social interactions, knowledge enhancement, relaxation, escape or diversion (Blumler, 1979).

5.3.2 Review and comparison of news framing of selected news networks.

After examining the coverage of two similar events by the AJE and CNNI, it is significant to discuss how all selected news of the campaign is framed. Evidence suggests that even though some news posted by news networks appeared to present counter-frames or tone of balanced coverage, these networks were biased in the way that they made the public pay more attention to certain issues than others. McCombs and Zhu (1995) discuss that the media is not neutral in the fullest sense of the term. The facts that they gather is what they present (McCombs & Zhu, 1995). The following subsections will interpret major framing trends of the coverage of the Kony 2012 campaign by the selected news networks. These results must be interpreted with caution because of possible bias in presenting certain frames rather than others.

5.3.2.1 Al-Jazeera English.

First, looking at news posted by AJE, evidence suggested that the three selected quotes used as posts by AJE were biased. Moral judgement and responsibility framing were used extensively even though they were attributed to others. For instance, the first post was a quote describing the video as a “product of idealistic youth”, and AJE asked the audiences if they agreed with the quote (see 4.2.3.1). The quote originated from the attached article, which stated explicitly that the campaign was propaganda. AJE did not provide a counter-frame for this perspective. The other post described the video as “simplistic and misleading”, and its title of “opinion” implies that the attached article was not the opinion of the network (see 4.2.3.4). Surprisingly, this article stated clearly that the campaign was propaganda, as well. Then AJE asked its audiences if they agreed with what the quotes said. AJE limited the alternative views by providing only the criticisms of the campaign. This showed that AJE has oppositional attitudes to including opposing articles on US foreign policy in the stories of its posts. Another example that emphasised this oppositional attitude was the “Uganda Speak” project in order to make the Ugandans’ voices heard which was not achieved by the IC campaign itself as AJE claimed.

Two videos were found from 2011 from AJE on YouTube relating to the American intervention designed to capture Kony before the launch of the Kony 2012 campaign. The first video, titled “US sends combat troops to Uganda” was

uploaded on October 14, 2011 and questioned why the USA sent troops to Uganda when they were already involved in two long wars. The first voice used in the film said clearly that the USA was in Uganda for oil. This meant that oil as being the cause of opposition by the participants was not new information. Then the report focused on the dimensions of President Obama's decision as well as Kony's atrocities in central African countries, and the video report suggested that Kony was hiding in South Sudan (Aljazeera English, 2011a). This reason was among the opposition's justifications that the audiences provided to oppose the Kony 2012 campaign.

The second video titled "US troops aid Uganda in hunt for LRA's Joseph Kony" on December 7, 2011 covered the USA military assistance, training, and logistical support to the Ugandan army to track down Joseph Kony. The report mentioned the arrest warrants the International Criminal Court issued for Joseph Kony and other LRA leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity (Aljazeera English, 2011b).

AJE appeared to be neutral in its coverage of the American military intervention in Uganda considering the fact that the two video reports of AJE were uploaded before the campaign launched in March 2012. One might question why AJE only presented negative framing of the IC campaign. AJE's approach was not only contradictory before and after the campaign, but also between the 2011 two videos, as the first one brought in both sides of the argument, and the second one covered the US military procedures and effort without leaving any negative impression. Thus, these results showed that news networks cannot be always fair or truthful toward the issue being discussed.

Another aspect that should be emphasised is that AJE was four days behind in its coverage compared to the coverage of the other news networks. Christians, Fackler, and Ferré (2012) explained that the focus of the AJE was to provide "breaking news" which was not as urgent as its Western counterparts. Conversely, the news items are longer and introduce more angles than other news networks. However, it has been discussed that people's attitudes toward political issues were not only influenced by the content of the messages, but also by the timing of messages (Chong & Druckman, 2010). Competing messages that were received at different times and messages that were received at the same

time may produce different preferences and effects. If competing messages were received at the same time, audiences would value the relative merits of the opposing opinions. However, if the audiences received the competing messages over time, the accessibility of the previous opinions and arguments will decay over time, and therefore individuals will value the immediate causes in the most recent message (Chong & Druckman, 2010). In the Spiral of Silence theory (see 2.5), time was a critical factor in public opinion formation because people were in a constant search for the opinion that would be dominant in the future, as well (Scheufele & Moy, 2000). Thus it was likely that the recent messages were valued by the AJE's participants, which could explain why the percentage of opposing content was not less than 60% in response to all posts. In general, the subjective tone of the AJE was evident and affected the public opinion of the campaign where the opposing public opinion was dominant.

5.3.2.2 CNN International.

The finding was that CNN International posts were likely to be more balanced than Aljazeera English (see Table 4). It has been seen that CNNI presented all aspects and counter-frames related to the campaign, including the campaign agenda, criticism of the campaign, and answers of the IC organization in response. Then the network asked the audiences for their opinions regarding the group's method and strategy, and if they thought this would affect the situation in Uganda or not. Open questions were directed to the participants so the participants could think of the issue without having limited frames to think within. In the third post (see 4.2.2.3), CNNI attributed external sources where the author of the attached article talked about the campaign's efforts first and then questioned why sick children in the area that Kony terrorised for 25 years were not covered by the video. Here, the author added the activity of connecting to the framing process as he restated some aspects of reality that were already perceived by the audiences (Kony 2012 campaign) to make the activity (nodding disease) traceable (Entman, 2004). For this post, the news was not framed to make some issues more salient, but to make connections among several factors.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the use of the visual content was effective in terms of how public opinion was formed. For instance, the third

post of CNNI focused on the disease that caused the death of many Ugandan children (see 4.2.2.3), but the picture that was attached to the post was that of Kony. This might explain why only two out of 50 comments discussed the “disease” while other participants kept discussing and opposing the campaign and American military intervention in Uganda. The participants may not have checked the attached links of the posts, and they were easily caught up by the visual images. CNNI’s adoption of the emotional frame by raising the issue of disease (and describing children suffering) did not change how the public viewed the campaign.

Conversely, the use of a touching picture of an infected crying child to cover the nodding disease for the second time (see 4.2.2.5) was effective because only five out of 50 discussed other issues. This post motivated some participants to support the American intervention in Uganda to fight the disease. This emotional frame with a picture of the crying child succeeded in diverting attention from CNNI after the anger that audiences showed because of the film screening in North Uganda.

Entman (2004) argues that no model explains how visual images may affect the political thinking. However, it is not logical to neglect the visual text because images can have more potential than words to activate the cognitive associations which were emphasised by Entman himself (2004). Foreign policy issues paid little attention to the visual dimension of media coverage. Ibrahim (2010) discussed that images can be used by the media to reconstruct tragic events to incite mass politics of pity that unite the public. There is a possibility that public opinion of the campaign on the CNNI was influenced by the emotional image employed in the post.

5.3.2.3 ABC News.

From the first post, ABC News targeted the average American who might not have been familiar with Joseph Kony before the campaign, so the first post introduced the campaign, its purpose, the video as a social phenomenon, and who Kony is. The second post highlighted the criticism against the IC organization regarding how the donations were spent and the organization’s answer to the criticisms. Both posts provided counter-arguments, and balanced coverage.

The third post was an interview with President Obama emphasising that American troops were sent to Uganda for conflation and not to fight. The interview represented the administration network outlined in the Cascading Activation model (see Figure 2), where the thought of supporting certain frames extends down from the administration passing through other networks until finally reaching the public. This post was followed by an emotional framed post, where a former escaped child soldier was interviewed. A quote from this interview was selected to be used and contained words like “dying”, “suffering”, and “abducted”. It emphasised the argument of McCombs and Zhu (1995) in that the best news material always maximized both drama and information. Interestingly, the response to this emotional framed post did not contribute sufficiently to the progressing support of the campaign as the progress rate was only 2%. This was because of other factors such as information exchange as in the following examples:

I don't understand why ONLY 37% of all that is donated goes to Africa (ABC 4-50, March 11 at 1:23am).

Last year 2/3 of donations went to marketing. Somebody has built quite a money making business around this situation (ABC 4-44, March 11 at 1:23am).

The exchanged information in these comments focused on financial practices of the campaign instead of showing their support for the campaign. From the above examples, ABC News appeared to have a less subjective tone compared to AJE. News framing seems not to be the main factor that influenced public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign on the ABC News Facebook page.

5.3.2.4 BBC News.

Finally, BBC World News posted once about the campaign. At first glance, the BBC appeared to have minimal influence on the audiences' comments. There were no attributed sources and no information provided by the network. However, the questions' wording and consequences of the questions were worth noting. As has been discussed, interest in the questions' wording emerged when little changes in wording affected comprehension by altering what participants thought of when they interrupted and answered questions (Perrin & McFarland, 2011). The first question relates to whether the audiences watched the film

which was designed to restrict the post to those who watched the video. The second question was open and asked the audiences about their opinions, but it was retracted with a closed question: “Has it changed what you think or do you find it patronising?” which was likely to stimulate the thoughts of audiences in the direction that they might only think about “whether the video is patronising” or not. The network restricted the options, and the aspects that the audiences could think of regarding the campaign. In other words, it framed the answer of the participants. The influence of the network was only measured in the first stage (see Figure 18).

Prior studies such as the Spiral of Silence and Threshold theories have noted the importance of the social environment on the public opinion formation process. Figure 19 simply shows the factors that motivated participants on cable news networks to express their opinions which are: 1) news framing, which has been already discussed in the first part of this chapter, and 2) personal characteristics of participants and their social environment which will be discussed in the following section, in order to provide explanation of how the public opinion of the campaign formed.

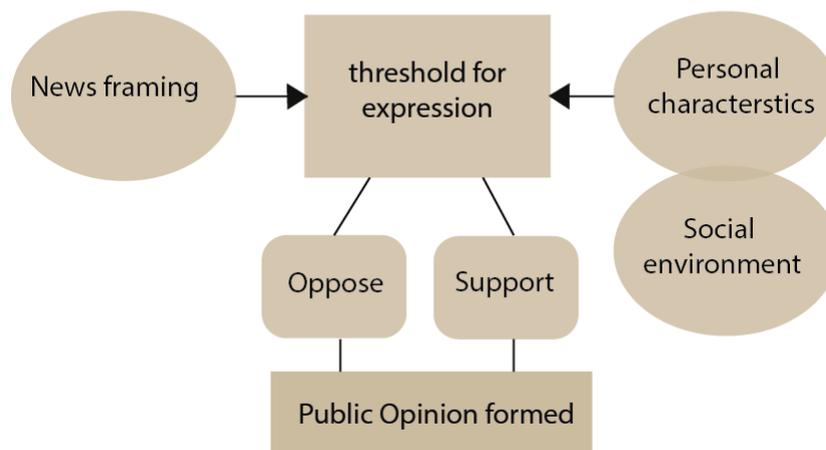


Figure 19. Mechanism of public opinion formation of the Kony 2012 campaign on the cable news networks’ pages on Facebook.

5.4 Influence of the Public on Cable News Networks and Public Opinion on Facebook

In order to achieve the second goal of the research, it was imperative to explain the effect of social networks on their public members. According to Fairclough’s (1992)

discussion of media construction (see 3.6), audiences view and stimulate news, and from thinking about it from their own angles, they conclude their own perspectives. These perspectives might be ideologically based. Moreover, the Spiral of Silence gives significance to individuals' interactions within their social environment; however, the participants in the Kony 2012 debate were global, representing cultural differences with their diverse social shared meanings, different interpersonal communication norms, and different definition of problems and solutions as discussed earlier by McLeod and Chaffee (1973). This was evident in the way the detention of the director was perceived by the participants on the AJE page and by participants on the ABC pages. The participants on ABC showed sympathy toward the director (see 4.2.3.5), but this led to increasing the percentage of opposition to the campaign on the AJE page (see 4.2.1.5).

The individual threshold for expressing opinions (see Figure 20) is a combination of both the individual's and the situation's characteristics according to the Threshold theory (Krassa, 1988). Defining individual characteristics of the participants was not easy as not all participants revealed their identities in the text they produced. Publicly accessible indicators like pronouns, geographical location, expressed national identities, affiliations' slogans and others were used to define characteristics. Categorization among participants appeared to affect how participants constructed their own and others' identities, as will be discussed in the following examples.

5.4.1 Influence of identifying membership of “a specific group” on adopted opinion.

Individual social networks that people identify themselves with can influence their opinions. A debate around the depth of connection between the users of Facebook has been conducted to determine how social networks work and how they influence the offline world (Wihbey, 2012). This study shows that strong ties between friends were more influential than weak ties. Information mobilization alone cannot be effective as it should be enhanced by social mobilization in an online public sphere (Wihbey 2012). Identifying the self as part of the group was apparent on the ABC page, and it was represented by two directions, which proved to have an impact on public opinion.

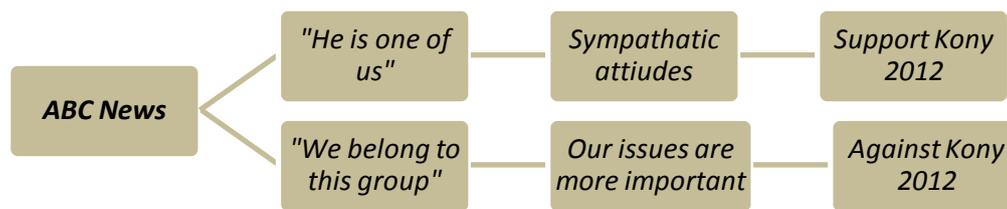


Figure 20. Examples of the influence of identifying membership of “a specific group” on public opinion.

5.4.1.1 “We” belong to this group.

In simple words, social groups and their members can be distinguished by who they are, what they do, what they want, what they believe in, where they stand, and what they do/do not have (van Dijk, 1998). The best example for this categorisation was opinion formed as a response to the first post by the American news networks ABC News. About 70% of the opposing content resulted from the preferences of the participants to focus on solving internal American issues. In the first fifty comments, participants used the pronoun “we” 42 times. “We” was meant to be “people who live in the US” and the possessive pronoun “our” was used 20 times. “Our” was accompanied with the word “country”, so “our country” was used to emphasise the internal issues by participants who seemed to be from the USA (see 4.2.1.1). They assumed to speak for all Americans, displaying strong patriotism and expressing national identity as in the following example: “We have issues at home to worry about first” (ABC News 1-3, March 8 at 6:32).

Harwood (2005) explains “we” in particular is one of the inclusive pronouns used by the authors when they assumed that others’ position was equivalent to that of their own. Moreover, it can be used to refer to the belief of the society as whole (Harwood, 2005). This idea embodies the “imagined community” of Benedict Anderson. Lampa (2004) discussed the imagined community of instant publishing. He explained that the sense of the community was coaxed into existence within the minds of its members in styles that derived from the medium itself, in this case Facebook, to create transitional discursive in the imagined community online. That was why it was

imperative to consider relations between individuals and the groups they belonged to in the adoption of certain ideas (Edwards, 2009).

Interestingly, participants on the ABC page did not use “I” to express their own personal opinions on a space that was assumed to be personal. Yet, on the BBC networks, the pronoun “I” was used 178 times in 250. As has been discussed, 39% of the participants used “I think” to start their comments (see 4.2.4). Howard (2005) explains that if the writer is persuaded by a particular point of view (e.g., I think, I feel, I believe), he/she feels that there was no need to justify their claims. The individual voice has become dominant since 1998 (Blommaert, 2005). The tendency of participants to express their personal voices might be interpreted by the network emphasis on the personal voice, “Have you seen the video? What did you think of it? Has it changed what you think?”

5.4.1.2 He is one of “us”.

The detention of the director of the Kony 2012 film appeared to be one of the main reasons that motivated participants on the AJE page to be against the campaign, as more than 23% of the opposing content criticised the director. Yet, on the ABC News page where its coverage was similar to AJE’s coverage regarding negative comments of the director, the percentage of support remained higher than the opposition percentage. This showed a sharp division in the opinion with 52% in support and 48% in opposition. Some of the participants separated the campaign from the director’s behaviour and others did not.

Expressing support towards what happened to the director varied from ten comments accusing ABC News of lying about the arrest of the director, to others who kept asking other participants to focus on the campaign and not on something else. Interestingly, sympathetic attitudes toward the director replaced the priority of Americans to solve internal issues; perhaps it was easy for an outsider to pass moral judgement (in-group vs. out-group).

5.4.2 Separating the “self” from the “other” before adopting opinion.

The third trend of categorization was observed in the tendency of participants to identify “self”, in order to separate it from the “others”, which seemed to have influence on adopting or rejecting certain opinions. Interpretation of the self and

others is related to tactical normative tasks that cultures hold for what individuals should do in their lives (Baumeister, 1999). These interpretations influenced individuals' experiences. People tend to fit within relevant others, and create obligations (Baumeister, 1999). However, identifying the self, in this context, can be seen as a strategy to gain credibility (and thus support) for a specific point of view. Within this cross-cultural context, pronouns like "we" were used in other pages as in "We Ugandans", "We Africans", "We in America", and "We in the West". As a reminder, participants' attributes can affect the selection of topics, or use of specific verbs or pronouns. The findings showed that the matter was whether or not the "campaign" was of interest to them and whether others were "like them" or not, a fact emphasized by Edwards (2009). Edwards explains that self-descriptions suggest that those outside the group are different, and they have different ideologies and beliefs. The comments that seem to be from Africans showed high vulnerability when distinguishing themselves before they stated their position of the campaign. This was described in a culture of "them" vs. a culture of "us" and developed as a product of post-colonialism discussed by Muiu (2010). For Muiu (2010), "them" always refers to colonial institutions, which were perceived to be tools for oppression and exploitation. "Us" could mean the majority of the people who were perceived to be exploited by postcolonial institutions (Muiu, 2010).

5.4.3 Ideology of a group as a source of knowledge.

Van Dijk (1998) confirms that there are no private ideologies, but only private opinions because ideologies are acquired, confirmed, and changed by members of a specific group. Ideologies have been classified in Chapter three as one of the context-related terms (see 3.5). While the individual's opinions are of interest, the question that may arise here is whether the media could have a counter-ideology. Van Dijk (1998) argues that the ideological influence of the media can only be pervasive in the case where media consumers do not have alternative ideological sources or personal experiences that are clearly inconsistent with dominant ideologies reproduced by the media, as is typically the case for foreign policy ideologies (van Dijk, 1998). As mentioned earlier, some information that participants provided to oppose the campaign was derived from the media itself. For instance, an interview in a video report by AJE suggested that the USA was in Uganda for oil, and the first post by an AJE attributed source

stated that the campaign was propaganda. Even the criticism of how the donation was spent was first discussed by ABC News (see 4.2.1.2) and CNNI (see 4.2.2.2) before participants used this information. Thus, participants brought into the discussion prior knowledge and experience.

Individuals reject pervasive ideologies when necessary, or adapt them according to their own needs, circumstances, or interests (van Dijk, 1998). For example, some participants focused on economic consequences of the campaign as they believed that the USA military was in Uganda for oil. The International Energy Agency report of 2012 showed that the US may overtake Saudi Arabia and become the top producer of oil by 2017 (Mackey, 2012). It was not about facts, but there was no evidence for rational discourse in this context.

Moreover, the participants perceived to be Americans, and who wanted their government to intervene, opposed the campaign because the internal issues including homeless families, starving children, rising gas prices, and employment should be solved first (see 4.2.1.1).

The third group of participants who opposed the campaign for economic consequences was composed of those who justified that a US intervention in Uganda would cause similar scenarios such as those of Iraq or Afghanistan wars. The first and the third group believed that economic resources were motivations to go to Uganda after large deposits of oil were discovered in the country. This train of thought could be explained by the post-colonialist idea that Western wealth is built on economic exploitation. This thought can be viewed in details in the following section.

5.4.3.1 Example: Influence of anti-colonialism ideologies on public opinion formation of the Kony 2012 campaign.

The majority of the participants on the AJE and CNNI Facebook pages appeared to be influenced by anti-colonial attitudes. The subjectivities that participants on AJE and CNNI showed after reporting the anger of the Ugandans were expressed in multiple ways. First, new words used to describe the practices of the Kony 2012 campaign appeared such as “imperialist”, “neo-imperialism”, and “modern colonialism”. This supported Muiu’s idea (2010) who posited that the colonialism in Africa was based on violence and exploitation. Muiu (2010) discusses that the populations of colonies were forced to work and produce. This could explain the development of the economic consequences discourse in participants’ discussions.

According to Muiu (2010, p. 1318), the postcolonial states are “post” in name only, and the independence of Africa was represented in three stages: physical removal of colonial powers from African colonies, “on-going struggle against neo-colonialism”, and economic unity and independence for all Africans (Muiu, 2010, p. 1318). The second stage which represented the on-going struggle against what is called “Neo-colonialism” marked comments that implied imperialist fear.

Given that the main colonial powers in the colonialism era were Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal (Ohaegbulam, 2004), and not the USA, it was necessary to explain the strong, opposing attitudes of Africans toward the American intervention in Uganda. Ohaegbulam (2004) discussed that US policy in the postcolonial African continent after WWII was focused on containing the communist ideology. It was rational to protect the status quo of the world that benefited the US and its allies and preserved America’s source of raw material in Africa where it had few responsibilities compared to Europe and the Middle East. The USA supported European colonial powers in strengthening their control over their political territories. For example, in the Angolan conflict (1975-2002), the USA had access to Azores in Portugal to help Portugal contain nationalists in Angola, but the Portuguese government was overthrown in 1974. Economic resources of the country, corrupt and external interventions fuelled the civil war which was derived from Portuguese colonialism. At that time, external support and intervention from the Soviet Union and USA was based on personal ambition over the state and wealth of the rich resource country (Ohaegbulam, 2004).

During data collection, the researcher noticed comments discussing possible American-Chinese conflict over resources in Uganda as in the following comment:

The U.S. and China are currently engaged in a cold war in Africa. KONY 2012 is just a well-organized and well-funded propaganda outlet. Having a U.S. military presence in the region tells China to back off. This is the very definition of imperialism. Responding to this emotionally plays right into their hands, congrats (AJE 2-30, March 15 at 8:46am).

It was likely that the information provided by the above comment was acquired from the news networks, as well. CNN International posted an article on its websites stating, “With Chinese yuan ...increasingly finding their way into Africa's economies, Western powers are worried that they are losing influence in the resource-rich continent, according to analysts” (Kermeliotis, 2011). This proved that news networks

were still the main sources of information that the public used to oppose the campaign. One would conclude that news networks do not affect how the public perceive the messages only, but provides the public with the elements that help them to build a counter-frame and evaluate the messages they receive, and thus assists them in building their opinion.

Public interest in African affairs found a place in public discussion after the Kony 2012 video (Bowie, 2012). Bowie believed that the US request for expansion into the Congo and Central Africa was to observe Chinese economic activities in Africa. China is deepening their economic engagement by working on developing the mining and industrial sectors of several African countries (Bowie, 2012). This change in the economic structure was not the only change that had an influence on how the public perceived the climate of opinion as we will see in the following section.

5.4.3.2 Transformation of power.

The transformation of power relations coloured the interaction among participants on news networks' pages on Facebook. Table 13 showed that 55 comments pages were against what was labelled as "Western", "American" or "white" while only six comments showed a kind of bias toward Africans. Participants on AJE and CJNI, who seemed to have a high percentage of African participants, had 46 comments against Westerners, while on the ABC News page, where the majority of the audiences appeared to be from the USA, only one comment was against Africans.

Some comments emphasised the responsibility of the "West" for what happened in other countries, or emphasised the existence of terrorists, as in the following comments:

West always wants to keep the terrorist alive in 3rd world countries (AJE 1-39, March 12 at 8:50pm)

the west gave us that illusion but deep inside they have always manage to put in place puppet leaders who had the west interest at heart(AJE 2-26, March 15 at 8:39am)

Some comments implied the benefits that Western countries might get from intervention in other countries' affairs which again remind us of the economic exploitation that colonialism was based on, as perceived by Africans.

the western countries never get involved in something they do not benefit from after a long time of kony's existence it is now that they remember to come and help just after the discovery of oil (CNNI 1-49, March 9 at 6:17pm).

These comments also showed a deep-seated, irrational bias that coloured their interpretation of events and general political discourse. The public sphere in this sense is not required as the political decisions based on this public opinion would not be rational or beneficial.

Furthermore, the “New World Order” that came after WWI and WWII represented a dramatic change in balance of power and political thoughts (Khatib, 2003). Now, political thoughts are challenged by globalization aspects that reshape the system of the world’s governments (Khatib, 2003). Suter (n.d.) believes that globalisation changed the relationships power between super-national entities and governments. The globalised public on social media platforms adhere to express their opinions freely, but whether or not this expression is considered is still debated. Online public opinion may not be considered until it leads to offline change like in the case of the “Occupy Wall Street” movement in September 2011 in New York City influenced by the Arab Spring protest (Graeber, 2011).

5.5 New Form of Expressing Opinion: Clicking the “Like” Button

Apart from public-media relationships and going back to the relationships between individuals or participants on Facebook, not all participants wrote text to comment on others’ posts. Facebook users can click “like” to express their support for the topic framed by the post. There has been little discussion on why people click “like” to express their opinions. There are several possible explanations for why people click “like”. First, in this context, participants are given the opportunity to choose from various sources over social media networks. Individuals’ selective exposure has been enhanced so individuals would follow and adopt the opinion that supports their own opinions (Knobloch-Westerwick & Meng, 2011).

Second, certain frames were used extensively in the most liked comments such as economic consequences, responsibility and the emotional frames. The economic and responsibility frames have been discussed in the previous section (see 5.4) as part of post-colonialist attitudes that coloured certain comments; however about 11 out of

the 20 most liked used the emotional frame in the responses that either supported or opposed the campaign (see Table 14) as in the following:

Humanity at its best again here perhaps the message OF HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD was missed by everyone ...at least they have the notion that NOT ALL IS LOST WITH HUMAN KIND ... your all missing the point ... the point that WHAT CAN A BILLION PEOPLE DO TO CHANGE THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN >>>> STRIVE TO BE BETTER!(CNNI 1-42, March 9 at 6:08pm).

Emotional wording mobilises and encourages people to follow (González-Bailón, Banchs & Kaltenbrunner, 2012). Opinion formation is dependent on how emotions mediate judgment, which varies among the respondents (González-Bailón et al., 2012). This can be seen as creation of global compassion on the media platform, which relates to the humanitarian movements that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries aimed at abolishing diverse forms of social injustices such as slavery and child labour (Hoijer, 2004). This would also motivate the moral responses by values systems (Ibrahim, 2010). The mediation of emotions was not restricted to media only, but also reflected in the participants' comments. Audiences or participants in the online environment were able to produce their text as well; even one could argue that they did not employ the emotional frame intentionally, but it still motivated others to click "like". Due to the lack of literature that supports this finding, the implications must be interpreted with caution.

Third, six of the most 20 liked comments originated from Uganda which meant that the proximity to the event was one of the factors that the public had considered before they expressed their approval/like to a post. The proximity to the event affected people's decision on whether to adopt others' opinions. Proximity was not a fundamental value for news production only, but it seemed that proximity to the event as criteria for credibility reflected first-hand experience. There was another possible reason for giving likes to certain comments. Krassa (1988) argues that individuals value opinion of some people more than others, but this might not be applicable on the online public sphere, where individuals are anonymous and connected to one another with relatively weak ties. However, these explanations are what might motivate individuals to click "likes" on others' comments instead of writing, meaning that the researcher could not fully answer this question, but may suppose that this was done for ease.

Key findings showed that information provided by news networks were the main sources participants used for the opposition. Schulz and Roessler (2012) state, “users do not take advantage of the online diversity as they are permanently led to the same kind of information, maybe even with the same tonality” (p. 329). From discussing whether the framing influence was valid in the online environment or not, it was apparent that interpretation of messages was different because people perceived things differently. For example, the attitude of the audiences toward CNNI made them perceive the coverage negatively as in the case of using the word “villagers” which aroused the anger of Africans. On the other hand, AJE with its subjective tone and latest coverage, succeeded and was not criticised and kept public opinion united with opposition at no less than 60%. Individuals can now select news content from unlimited sources of news on the internet. They adapt their opinion to what is compatible with their interests and expectations which is the core of the Use and Gratification Theory.

The primary groups that used to be social networks: friends, family members, co-workers, and neighbours (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) turned out to be complicated as global audiences are involved. Social ties on social networking sites were weak and limited. Social networks expanded by the strength of these ties were limited as well, which meant that the effect of the social networks’ public influence was undefined. These results were not very encouraging. There was an abundance of orientation to history and the “colonialism era” such as in the Africans’ case, or to the willingness to adopt the ideologies that suited individual’s current needs and circumstances as in the case of the participants on the ABC page. Everything revolved around individuals, and the sense of community that was built by mass communication (McCombs, 1997) was absent in the online environment; therefore the Fear of Silence (see 2.5) might not be applicable here. Mass media achieved the consensus of public opinion by narrowing the focus in society at large, by reducing the individual differences among groups of people within a specific community as discussed by McCombs (1997). Despite this, it was impossible to accomplish this consensus with international news networks on Facebook targeting the global public. History and contemporary trends of public opinion polls assert the variations that exist among different segments of a particular society, which stimulate us to think of the differences that exist among the global public. Use of certain frames, seeking opinions supporting personal interest, and

proximity to the events appeared to motivate people to click “like” on others’ comments. However, this did not provide an answer to why people click “like” instead of writing comments. How framed news and the public interact in their social environment was detailed in this chapter.

And lastly, public opinion in general was against the Kony 2012 campaign, and it varied across news networks. The highest division in public opinion was on the BBC Worlds News’ page on Facebook, where participants proved to be individualistic. Overall, interest of the public in the Kony 2012 campaign decreased as the number of likes decreased constantly, unless news networks posted news that interested audiences such as emotionally framed news. Even the online environment was free from restrictions such as the gate-keeping function practised on the cable news networks’ platforms, meaning that the public sphere was indifferent to the traditional platform. The participants were influenced by emotional posts and comments, and their bias represented in the ideologies that made public opinion irrational. The online public sphere was about the individuals themselves and what information they seek to acquire, as mentioned previously, which meant that there was not a legitimate public sphere. People have their own self-constructed information bubbles, and everyone has his/her own bubble (Schulz & Roessler, 2012).

5.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed and integrated the key findings and themes that emerged and developed from the literature review up to the processing of research results. This chapter started with an-in-depth discussion of the most note-worthy observations and results. Some quotes of the participants’ comments have been included in this chapter to highlight the main discourse themes developed during the formation of public opinion as well as to add depth and clarity to the way the researcher concluded the main statements. Not only framing of news and social networks proved to have had an influence on the public on Facebook, but also the public had an impact on other participants. In addition, clicking “like” was discussed in terms of the influence of the social environment. The next chapter is a conclusion to this thesis which is expected to provide details of future research besides limitations and contributions of the present research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This study has given an account of the factors that affected the formation of public opinion on cable news networks' pages on Facebook. Critical Discourse Analysis was employed on the posts, and comments were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, in addition to Intertextuality. One of the objectives to conduct this research was to see how the subjective tone of coverage, particularly framing, affected the perception of the public and consequently how public opinion was formed. The framing effect was projected through the news networks framing from posted news. The second objective set out for this research was exploring how the public's social environment and networks affected the perception of the campaign's relevant news, and how the public reacted to the posted news. The final aim was to investigate why Facebook users click the "like" button to express their opinions. In order to conclude this thesis, this chapter will be constructed into three sections: review of the findings, suggestion for future research, and acknowledgement of research contribution and restatement of the limitations.

The questions of this research were:

4. How do news networks on Facebook affect the formation of public opinion?
5. How do the public's characteristics and their social networks (social environment) affect perceptions of the news and consequently, the formation of public opinion?
6. What motivates Facebook users to click "like" on certain comments as a way of public opinion expression?

6.2. Overview of the Research Findings

The findings of research have already been discussed in Chapter five with reference to public opinion formation theories presented in Chapter two, and with specific reference to the meanings extracted from the participants' comments such as the anti-American ideologies and post-modernity subjectivities that participants who appeared from Africa proved to have. In this chapter, no further elaboration of the discussion

will be conducted, but instead the research findings will be summarised in order to provide insights into the contribution of the current research to the body of knowledge.

The research retrieved the core of the Spiral of Silence Theory of Noelle-Neumann (1974), where the public seemed to depend on two sources of information: the media and social environment. CDA was adopted as a framework (due to the insufficiency of content analysis) to explain certain criteria of framing such as choices of pronouns, visual images, attrition of participants, and references to other discourse and events.

There were major patterns detected from the perception of opinions on cable news networks' pages on Facebook. First, the information that the public perceived from the online environment depended on the information they selected from the news networks' coverage. For example, the fact that the donation was misspent by the IC organization and that the video was propaganda was covered by the news and was among the reasons that audiences provided to oppose the campaign. This meant that the information provided by other participants, as the climate of opinion, was derived from the news networks' coverage. What has been emphasized in the Pluralist Ignorance of Taylor (1982) and what has been the case is that participants assumed that others have the same position toward the issue, even if the assumption is inaccurate. This would affect how individuals perceive news and form their own opinions. The climate of the opinion that was assumed to be subjective due to news framing was not necessarily subjective. The results of this study showed that interpretation of media messages differed among individuals who used different frames of references. In the case of coverage of the film screening in Uganda by AJE and CNNI, we have seen that selection of news networks and attitudes that audiences have towards news coverage affected how the latter perceived the news, and this was also interpreted by the preferences of audiences, which aligned with the Use and Gratification theory. An individual's willingness to adopt the opinions that supported their positions or current circumstances was evident.

The research also detected the use of certain frames in the most liked comments, but research had no answer to provide as to why individuals were motivated to click "like" instead of writing comments. There was an emphasis on the significance of personal interests and emotions. Lastly, public opinion varied across

news networks. The highest division observed on the public sphere were where participants appeared individualistic. Participants were influenced by emotional posts and their subjectivities. Individuals in the online mediated environment have their own self-constructed information spheres (Schulz & Roessler, 2012), and everything is about them as they seek the information that suits them as single entities. The public sphere in this sense is not required as it is coloured by the bias individuals have, so opinion formed in this sphere cannot serve the interest of the public.

6.3 Further research and contribution to knowledge

First, it would be worthwhile to conduct further research with ethical approval to study the identity of the participants in the online public environment. It would be easier to track their personal profiles on Facebook and compare their real life characteristics (as a climate of opinion) with the opinions they adopted. Moreover, the current study investigated the characteristics of the 20 participants' comments that received the highest number of "likes", but could not explain why they clicked "like" to express their opinions instead of writing a comment. Employing a large sample would help in answering this question. It has been noticed that the same audience participated in different news networks which was not discussed in the current time due to the limited scope of this study. Therefore, future similar studies could focus on the tendency of participants to repeat the same comments, on different platforms, and what this means in terms of the formation of global public opinion. Lastly, applied linguistic analysis can be used in a similar study as a research method to analyse how certain words, pronouns, phrases and metaphors have been used.

In terms of the effect of media on public opinion, several posts have links to videos and articles that were either written by the editors of the networks, or by external sources. Even though the researcher examined the content of the messages, the scope of the current research did not assist her to focus on the attached content. Further research could investigate the content of the attached links in-depth and study how certain aspects were employed such as the selection of headings, sub-headings, attributed sources, words, and how the videos or the articles were concluded. Also, similar future research could focus on the effect of agenda setting, in addition to the effect of the campaign to know what the criteria that each news network used to produce and distribute news to audiences.

Moreover, the public conversation on cable news networks' pages was rich with an unlimited number of themes and discourse that were developed over time. A similar study can be conducted to ascertain public opinion of the campaign on only one news network Facebook page in order to map the development of public opinion easily and in-depth. As reported earlier, the consensus of public opinion was higher on CNNI and AJE. A comparative study to investigate the formation of public opinion on CNNI and AJE would be interesting especially with the apparent different assumptions that audiences have toward the coverage of both channels.

It is expected that this research will contribute to communication studies by understanding how public opinion is developed in the online communication environment, by studying the factors emphasised in the public opinion theories which proved to have an impact on the offline public sphere. The study mapped global public opinion formation. It somehow showed that the online public sphere was no different from the offline sphere and that it might also be irrational and biased and full of subjectivities. This study looked at the effect of mass media, but on a different platform where there might be no consideration for the local climate of opinions. The study explored the qualitative aspects, in addition to quantification of public opinion, whose research is often quantitative in nature.

6.4 Limitation of research

The findings drawn from this research are tentative as they are restricted by the analytical abilities of the researcher, and the nature of the samples collected from cable news networks' pages. The sample was relatively large and had an unlimited number of the aspects which a one year period would not allow to study in depth. Thus, it was impossible to claim that the findings have given an insightful picture of public opinion. The researcher took the risk of adopting CDA to enhance the content analysis of the discourses that appeared to be biased as this framework was uncommon, but the critical view could affect the interpretation. Finally, not all the aspects provided by the statistical analysis of the research could be used due to the limited scope of this study.

Moreover, the researcher's background needed to be controlled as she frequently referred to the Gulf war in 1991 and the Iraq war in 2003, which was an obstacle in the beginning of this research, as the researcher had pre-assumptions of

the campaign as being comparable to the Iraq war 2003. Setting these assumptions aside helped the researcher to think deeply of the way in which this research could produce new insights. Even with the inter-rater reliability that was tested in the analysis, there was always a potential of inaccuracy which was likely to be more related to the nature of processing the online data by different researchers.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined the highlights of this research, how this thesis contributed to the field of the study, has stated its limitations, and put forward what areas could be looked at for further research. By combining different research methods to gather information about trends of public opinion about this issue, and comparing the media framing of news with public opinion, the researcher could find a better view of how public opinion is formed. Integrating CDA with content analysis (which is said to be a paradigm), employing different models to measure how public opinion formed, and analysing what factors affected the formation of opinion has laid a foundation for how public opinion of the Kony 2012 campaign was developed. In brief, online public opinion is not independent of the offline public opinion which proves that the hypodermic needle effect of news is overrated.

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Appendix

Appendix A

The five most liked comment on the selected Cable News Networks

A. CNN International

1. WTF is up with the Kony bandwagon? No offense to y'all... but you watch one youtube vid, repost it, and then you forget all about him. This guy's been doing his thing for years and you think the Internet is gonna stop him? This isn't Egypt or Lybia or Syria. This is freakin Sub-Saharan Africa. Where were you guys when the US sent troops to assess and advise against the LRA several months ago? (CNNI 1-5, March 9 at 5:42pm).

Like: 15

2. The only thing CNN knows about Uganda is Kony! what a world we live in? Uganda has got other good things and we are proud of our country and remember we don't have homeless people like the western world!!(CNNI 4-14, March 14 at 9:41pm).

Likes: 11

3. Humanity at its best again here perhaps the message OF HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD was missed by everyone ...at least they have the notion that NOT ALL IS LOST WITH HUMAN KIND ... your all missing the point ... the point that WHAT CAN A BILLION PEOPLE DO TO CHANGE THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN >>>> STRIVE TO BE BETTER! !(CNNI 1-42, March 9 at 6:08pm).

Likes: 9

4. Why don't they put out their own viral video and stop the criticizing of others that are trying to make a difference... (CNNI 3-5, March 13 at 3:28am).

Likes: 9

5. CNN, why ain't u guys telling informing us about the homeless people in NewYork and Washington? The time Kony was killing people in Uganda u never used to inform the world , what a world???????????? (CNNI 4-14, March 14 at 9:44pm).

Likes: 8

B. Al Jazeera English

6. Am Ugandan and we are surprised,kony terrorised Uganda for 20 years in the north cutting off people's lips,raping them but all that time the US never came out to hunt him down now he is gone there sending troops to Uganda to hunt him down yet he fled to central Africa.did they come because we discoverdoil?why come when the damage is already done.was he untouchable by then?we need answers (AJE 2-6, March 14 at 5:43pm).

Likes: 43

7. here is a hashtag #FuckKonyits a scam, a fraud, and an excuse to get more US involvement in Africa #NeolImperialism (AJE 3-1, March 15 at 8:10am).

Likes: 31

8. Kony has been in uganda torturing innocents for over 16yrs bt America has been quite for that long but now oil has been discovered in uganda, they are wakening aready sleepy kony two years back. Sorry We are grtful with your concern but your military help is nolonger needed (AJE 3-10, March 15 at 8:19am)

Likes: 27

9. if you are so concerned with humanitarian issues, how about starting a 'Clinton2012' campaign. You know, for the 500,000 children who died when he imposed UN sanctions on Iraq and they couldn't get food or medical treatment? (AJE 3-14, March 15 at 8:22am).

Likes: 27

10. What about #BUSH2012, #BLAIR2012 or better yet #NETANYAHU2012. People sharing a 30min video telling them to support a campaign to remove a dictator through US intervention need to take a look at Iraq and Libya. Kony has been carrying out atrocities since 1986 and suddenly-when the West need oil to go to war with Iran-they decide they need to get rid of him. This campaign is headed by Invisible Children-a 'charity' that only puts 31% to charitable use! All this #KONY2012 thing is, is propaganda to expand Africom and further steal Africa's resources. People posting the video and putting #KONY2012 are products of this propaganda. More fool you... (AJE 3-25, March 15 at 8:39am).

Likes: 19

C. BBC World News

11. Why waste time criticizing an effort to bring a criminal to justice? The world is becoming smaller from social media -Invisible Children took advantage of the "new age" of social media and made millions of people aware of an issue otherwise ignored. Yes it was a cleverly created film- but the stories from the people who have experienced the wrath of Kony spoke for themselves (BBC 130, March 10 at 2:26am).

Likes: 10

12. the "charity" invisible children is being questioned because of there ethics. they have previously supported the sudanese rebels who had 5000 child soliders. they are only doing this to garner support so they can remove a power to put in their own. self serving with a purpose. idont agree with what kony is accused of doing, but by supporting the campaign, your supporting invisible children, who make money everytime the video is watched and shared, which then goes to groups they support, like the sudanese rebels, who use it to buy guns, for their own child soliders. so by trying to stop children being used as soliders, your actually, even though it may be unwittingly, supporting the ideal your trying to stop. kony2012 is nothing but spindoctoring at it's finest (BBC 31, March 9 at 11:52pm).

Likes: 9

13. I'm confused. So because Kony has left Uganda he should not be caught and tried in court?? So if I rob a bank in Texas and then move to Wisconsin I can avoid jail?? There are complications and corruption and monsters all over the world. That doesn't mean we should give up on humanity. I never heard of Joseph Kony before this week and only knew of child soldiers from watching Blood Diamond. After watching the film by Invisible Children, I understood Kony's crimes, that he had since left Uganda, and that this campaign's main goal is to catch him and bring him to justice. I didn't think it was confusing. And by the way, I'm white but I don't possess the "white man's burden" and I think that's offensive. I'm a human being who cares that other human beings are being mistreated. I'm a Mother who thinks about my own son when I see young boys being stolen and brainwashed. I don't have a burden or guilt. I have empathy (BBC 124, March 10 at 2:07am).

Likes: 8

14. From my point of view I think what the western world is trying to do may be a necessary evil. As a Ugandan and we all know that the Ugandan government has the worst human rights record as some of you people put it. But trying to make our government seem like it has done nothing at all then there you have got it wrong. Because this government has done everything to see to it that this Kony guy is eradicated, and at the moment he is in central Africa which is thousand miles away from Uganda. And another thing that surprises me is that the guy has been killing people and doing all sorts of horrible things for about 20 years. Where was this dedication to oust him, when he killed 60,000 people where were the super powers to help the Ugandan forces seriously you guys are just making fun of us and well you should get serious issues to deal with and just leave Uganda alone. And if you want Kony maybe you should look for him in central Africa but not in our country because you are a little bit late for that. For God and my country UGANDA (BBC 195, March 10 at 6:12pm).

Like: 7

15. I live in Uganda so I am Ugandan Kony has not been in Uganda for over 5 years now... there is no more night trekking in those districts although there is an outbreak of a weird disease but certainly not by the hands of KONY... so what on earth is that video all about? other than collecting \$30 for coins or what ever? (BBC 96, March 10 at 12:48am).

Like: 7

D. ABC News

16. Why can't we be this passionate about our own country and the war we're already involved in. I wish we would focus more on what's going on in our own back yard rather than on the other side of the planet. Not that they don't deserve it, I just think we need to straighten ourselves out first. Just a thought... (ABC 1-4, March 8 at 4:34pm).

Likes: 22

17. I am tired of hearing people say why does the US have to get involved. do they not realize how much work this guy has put into this project?? And what he is doing for not only the children of their country but look what he is teaching the children and adult of our country.. WHY do people have be negative..if you want to do something in OUR country than do it.. put the effort into it and do it, make a stand create a movement you have the social network at your fingertips for support!!! I applaud this gentleman and group doing this!! (ABC 1-8, March 8 at 4:38pm).

Likes: 20

18. Wow some people are just heartless!!! Stop being selfish!! As Americans we should help when we can. We are are so lucky and blessed to live here, why can't we try to help others who do not have the same blessings we do!!! (ABC 1-16, March 8 at 4:50pm)

Likes: 19

19. We also had "issue's at home" during the Holocaust.... that is CRAZY to say. This can't be ignored. If your child were there, you would want to have awareness raised. I don't care if 10% of my money is going there (because the owners need rides/airfare etc... to get there)...they are doing SOMETHING which is more than you and I are doing right now. These are children suffering. Little girls crying in the middle of the night because they are being raped and tortured! If you are OK with that then you have lost your mind. ...period. We are HUMANS and no matter what country you belong to, it IS OUR DUTY to stop this (ABC 1-29, March 8 at 5:10pm).

Likes: 17

20. People should concentrate on what Kony is doing and not anything else. Don't forget the children (ABC 5-1, March 17 at 9:27am).

Likes: 17